Introduction to A Strange Music

Working up a collection of poetry at the outbreak of the Gulf War, I began incorporating snatches of military dialogue and civilian reactions, including my own, into my writing. The military accounting gradually subsumed the poetry and this manuscript is the result. The Gulf War in blank verse. Collateral damage as they say.

Open verse format, established in the unfocused opening pieces, with no idea they would continue to accumulate into book form, proved a useful way to continue representing the crapulous verbiage of war while permitting a latitude of personal response outside the bounds of customary reportage.

Transformations in my own orientation to the subject, as a representative observer, seem to me to be as pertinent to this document as its chronology of unfolding events as presented by the media. I began by listening for a strange music I thought I detected as an undertone to impending war. This thread served to lure me into the fray.

For grist I relied mainly on CNN, the indisputable world organ of war reportage, availing myself freely of the data provided by this extension of my ears and eyes, if not my mind. The mind was exercised by threading through mine fields of censored, biased or incomplete information to arrive at an independent perception. Alertness is the third casualty of war, after truth and decency.

I don't know, or care to decide, if this war should have been fought or not. If you put the cat among the pigeons certain results may be expected. Prejudgement on my part would exclude many shades of debatability which seemed worth recording. For the most part, a controlled exercise in tolerance of ambiguity allowed me to examine and portray situations without attempting to prove anything beyond what dialectic unraveled of its own accord.

San Rafael, California
March 4, 1991

A STRANGE MUSIC

Sing, Muse, of death
in battle and of the
shining wreaths of
victory. Of Soldier,
Sailor and Marine, of
Aviator and of Enemy.
of flashing bayonet
and field artillery.

The columns roll,
trenches yawn,
flash steely teeth,
snap up their meat.

Sing of honor and dishonor,
of injustice and oppression.
Of wrong addressed in blood
more crimson than the sun
rising through the smoke of
scarry battle shriven, sing!

Hail Queen Victory
in her raiment of
multicolored flames,
from dark ascended,
to consort with destiny.

A Note on Method:

Applying a technique of
observation, quotation,
extraction, abstraction,
transcription & refrain,
strange music emerges
seeming to be the song
of electronic war in
counterpoint to itself.

The method is one of
ignorance, innocence
& attempted impartiality,
refusing to turn back or
re-think a day's insights,
or lack of, in light of the
next day's revelations.

The attempt to make sense
of trying to make sense
of something that possibly
makes no sense
makes a sense of its own;
a sense often more akin
to music than to reason.

Deadline 1/15/91

It's 20 minutes to midnight,
January 15, 1991 & nobody
knows what's going to happen
once the deadline comes & goes.
Innocence is still a factor.

Now it's 11:45 (Eastern time)
& five minutes closer to
the deadline than when
I started writing these lines.

Sense of impending disaster.

The U.N. & Congress have said
bombs can cut loose at midnight,
though it may take a while, if ever,
before they do. On the other hand,
sights may be locking in place.

Now it's ten minutes to deadline.
Will they pull out in time?
Will a solitary truck begin heading
back North where it came from,
then another, maybe a tank or two?

No one really believes it.
I don't believe it too.

Time to turn on the television,
watch excitement mount and
allow the national countdown
to blur the distinction between
media & my individual senses.

Five minutes to go. Nothing across
the channels re-enforces the
experience of impending war.
There's no countdown going on.
Programming remains per usual.

Only two minutes to go.
Finally found a countdown.
on NBC. No great shakes.
What the hell is going on?
Is this news or is it not?

One minute to go - is this some
kind of hoax? Now it's midnight.
We've crossed the deadline
& nothing is happening.
This quiet could be misleading.

1/16/91

All of a sudden it was on;
complete & utter massacre.
Baghdad didn't know what
hit it. If reports can be trusted,
Coalition forces destroyed
Iraqi air defense capability
in one emphatic pounce.

Wham bam thank you ma'am.
War ain't what it wuz.
Went to the convenience store
after the strike where
nobody said anything about it.
A state of shock? Or
don't they even know yet?
Is that it? Someone on
TV says there'll be more & not
to give way to false elation,
that this is only the beginning.
But no-one seems to really believe that.

Isolated Threats (collage & comment)

Mindful of the situation,
closed consultation in
very heartfelt debate,
a commitment
of great delicacy,
extraordinary pressure,
almost miraculously
going into another night
fully expecting to be forced.

There has been speculation.
Don't know for sure that

they would not retaliate
with poison gas & do not
discount the possibility.

Something extraordinary.
Everyone is waiting to
get the reports or is it
only another false alarm?

Soviet Scud missile
explodes in Tel-Aviv,
Officials hope Israel
will show patience &
keep on the sidelines,
not offend Arab members
of the Coalition but no
confirmation is forthcoming.

Supposedly just a harassment
attack from a sore loser.

Along with television
comes news of cough
remedies & corn flakes.
Commercials can all be
heard as indirect comments
on the war. Phenomenon
of intense narrow focus.

Like no conflict in history,
even in the enemy camp,
for so long virtually arcane,
having to deal with this
kind of media-attention.

Has media coverage had
an impact on Saddam's
decision to bomb Israel?
Quick to assumers are
assuming the anti-war

demonstrations are giving
him some sort of idea of
swaying popular sentiment.

I remember this well
from another war in
another time. Very
same words on both
sides of the issue.

1/19/91 #1 - Unfathomable

A meeting between
Arafat & King Hussein.
a discussion or just a visit?

Palestinian
question
interspersed
with ads.

After 3 days strange
music comes out of it.
"In one last desperate bid,
people of good will could
redouble their attempts
at further diplomacy,
somehow make an effort,"
says some spoilsport.

Neither the means to
confirm, detect or deny
any specifics out of Iraq.
An ex-military type says:
"I hope Saddam has a good
sense of humor because
it's going to be a big joke."
I wonder if this is so.
No, I don't think it will be so.

"A big step in maybe
getting some world peace
around this country,"
says a call in viewer.
Very effective. Can't miss.

"And we'll be back with
more right after this."
"A durable value. You
can have it today."
"An American classic."

1/19/91 # 2 Taking Care of It
(random comments heard while channel surfing)

Several thousand rallied
& arrests were made
... spilling over into
other neighborhoods
all across the country.

Not authorized to disclose -
- opinions fueled by false
reports - Can't live for
what they're gonna think.
You can run your little tail off,
Saddam, but it's gonna be glorious.

Clarify that up for us.

Fighting said to be minor.
Demonstrators burned the
flag & listened to speeches
chanting & carrying signs

They were absolutely livid
because they weren't sent
over here with spare parts.

Rain turning the dust out
there to thick oozing mud.

I'm not going back to that
canned footage while I've
got real people out there to
interview. Let's go to Hartford!

No more cookies to the Front.
No more care packages.
First class mail only, please.

He believes he can wait
out an attrition strategy
& is willing to die in place
if necessary to help stir
up Arabic opposition.
Or is he still alive?

The whole base was envious.
Only reporter to get a jet ride.

Because of the protestors the
task is difficult this morning.
766 adults were interviewed
by telephone this morning.
Twenty percent said neither.

Some nations are censoring
weather reports thinking
they may aid terrorists.
Most of the population of
Israel is staying indoors.

I'm waiting, watching & wondering.
Praying all day & all night & all the
time even in the car, says a call in viewer.

1/19/91 #3 Day Four Begins
(extracts)

This effort will
take some time.
Weeks not days.
Weeks not months.

His strategy is to
lie back, to lie back,
to lie back & then hit.
But it won't work here.

Certainly technology
is marvelous but
it all comes down
to people going after
other people on foot.

Welcome back. If there
is breaking news we
will break immediately.

Israel declares it's not in the
reflexive response business.

We will of course update
you immediately in case
of great defense here.

Just how quick will it be over, General?

I believe that unless
something unexpected
happens it'll be over
like instant popcorn.

Irrespective of the time frame
one of the things we should
be doing is having some goals.

Ten to fifteen thousand

moved down to the mall
being inaccurate or at
least soft peddling which
struck a chord with me
since I saw corruption
of the language going on.

A fractured, fragmented
view which you must
piece together yourself.
How it is what it is not
more than it appears
& also neither of these.
Now back to our report.

1/19/91 #4 Call-In Show Dialogue

I don't think we belong there
for all of the above reasons.
Does he want to have that
in history again? It's more
wrong what we're doing
than what they're doing.
Thank you very much.

Thank you for letting our
field commanders get the
job done with confidence.
Wake up & smell the coffee.
Democracy is on the move.

I don't know where they get off.
People should get on their knees
& pray to God because the bible
tells me which side to be on.

We don't have a right in my
opinion to make judgements
on people in other parts of the

world. I've been a widow before.

I just think with the
bombing & killing
& everything going on
everybody responsible
ought to be shot.

They just seem to enjoy
bombing people of color.
We love the soldiers.
We will pay the price
of what they owe us.
I think they got the wrong man.
When the blood rolls down
the sandhills someone is
gonna have a real bad conscience.

It's the logical outcome
& I don't think we
should be surprised.
Must look at the deeper
causes of the problem
so this madness doesn't
happen again.

Intellectual mediocrity
& historical blindness.
We will have to deal
with consequences
that will haunt us
for many years to come.

You begin to feel limited
after awhile & use
whatever means are
at your disposal.

Some of the kids at school
think we should just

pull out the soldiers &
more or less forget about it.
Some couldn't even think about
what they did or didn't want.

Sometimes the tendency
is to exaggerate. Thank you
very much for calling. We
appreciate it. The guy who
said we only bombed people
of color ought to look at
what we did to Germany.
Thank you very much.

Activists are just concerned
with what's right for them,
not what's right or wrong.
Do you know what I mean?

We welcome your calls.

I'd just like to say I have
a brother I'm proud of.
He had a chance to come
home & didn't.

I think it's their right to
protest but I don't think
they should do it the
way they do. Thank you.

I think we have no
right to go & punish
another murderer.
We should be ashamed.

People don't realize
if we don't stop this
man now we'll just
have to pay the price

later on down the line.

1/19/90 # 5 All Clear
(channel switching in search of news)

We'll be back right after this.

It matters where you get
your news - if you don't
take care of your customers
they'll go somewhere else.

Crisis wars can have
unintended results.
I wish they could prevent
that but the fact is it doesn't.
Our intelligence people have
pretty good results but it's
hard to say so I don't know.
It depends not only on his
stability but his capacity. I
don't wish to discuss specifics.
God knows what they'll do next.

We know how it started &
we know how it'll end. It's
the middle part that's difficult.

I think we don't know that
& I can't give you an answer.

Heavy machine gun fire
in Latvia as hard line
communists open fire on
the independents there.

It looks like the first phase is
over & we'll get back to you
when it all starts again.

Both wives are refusing to
comment on whether they
recognize the prisoner's voices.

To come back to your question
you seem to be making a case
for supporting the opposition.

As Latvian's bury their dead
they resolve this will not be
the end of their independence.

1/20/91 #1 War & the NFL Playoffs

3 missiles blown out of the sky
before they could hit us. 4 hours
later it happened again. None hit
the ground. Some people looking
skyward died in a car wreck. We
checked into all the hospitals but
that's all the injuries we could find.

People were leafleting trying
to blockade the game today,
that's why the police are here.
Should put their time & energy
into something better than trying
to destroy all we got going here.
Half of the cops are going home
& the protesters are packing up.
The fans are quick to point out
they're being attentive to the war.
This was a game they had already won
& were just waiting out the clock
when they realized he's just
freewheeling out there
taking his time & waiting.

...unstoppable as they've
been these last two weeks
of playoff action ...we've
lost 8 of our aircraft &
the same number of Allied's.
That's very light:remember
this isn't a training action.

To all men of good will
throughout the world:
you have the beauty of Holy War,
you should be associated
with your brothers,
with the struggle.
...What you have to do
when you're behind like this
is take the ball away from them.
One team gets the edge,
the momentum, then just
takes it out of them.

There appears to be a missile attack.
This is not a drill. Let's go. Focus!
...It appears we've lost our audio.
...And now back to the game.

And its all Buffalo today in W. New York.
Very suddenly flares were flying,
sirens began to sound & we realized
we were under an intense attack
very close to our position here.
Time flies when you're having fun.
GO NOW! Get into the bunker!

We've got a developing situation just now.
Hello New York, this is Saudi Arabia,
this is not a drill. Let's go! Focus!
We will have more during the halftime.

1/20/91 #2 Day Five Begins

The day of the rocket has
become its own art form
in Tel-Aviv art circles.
There is no message
just cynical content.
To eliminate evil and
corruption everywhere,
this is your duty. All
war to date has been
practice for this one.
There is no message
just cynical content.

We're being told to abandon
this position immediately.
The Riyadh siren sounds
like a woman falling off a cliff.

The enemy knows how
to be in the desert
without purified water,
how to suck milk from a camel.
They'll just lie and wait
until we come after them.

We have not even begun
to show you what we have.
We will boil your fat for soap.
The dry chuckle of distant
automatic weapon bursts.
There's no turning back.

1/20/91 #3 Today's Innocence

Today's innocence is what
we will not have tomorrow.

Effective at times, other
times not. Why don't we
know what we don't know?

Who are we anyway?

Advertently, in moments
of stress, we are careful
not to put out information.

Is Saddam flying with his
tray table up & his seat
in a fully upright position?

Tomorrow we will know what
we don't know today or the
reasons it is just as well
we don't know it in light of
what we won't know next.

Is the amount of damage
we're inflicting tremendous?
Would I be stupefied to know?

Tomorrow's innocence is
what I do not have today.

1/20/91 #4 U.S. Military Briefing
answers w/o questions

Well into day five we
plan for the worst
we hope for the best.
I would rather not
give you that number.
For operational
security reasons
I will not tell you
nor would I

want to tell you,
I would rather couch
it in another context
& we will continue
to do that.
I think it would
be inappropriate
for me to identify
that at this time.
I would remind you
of what you are
all familiar with &
that is the fog of war.

It has continued to
impact our ability.
In response to your
first question, I
don't know & that
makes it impossible
for me to address
the second question.
Would we like the
weather to be better?
Yes.
For reasons of both
operational security
& the safety of
the crew I would
request I not
answer that question.
We will execute our
campaign on our
schedule when we
are ready & it
is appropriate.

I have no comment
on that. We will
continue to the

best of our ability.
I really can't just
answer. I know
nothing about that.
That would really be
speculative & I don't
want to do that.

For operational reasons
I will not answer
that question. Again,
I would not like to
be any more specific.

1/21/91 #1 Day Six Begins
(comments from a call in show)

If all the enemy population
are potential soldiers like he says
it's alright to bomb everybody.
That's collateral damage in a war.

Some things are worth fighting for
& this protest is not one of them but as
long as they keep their activities directed
at politicians & not the troops it's alright.

We know not every missile is hitting
it's target - we know innocent people
are being killed — but that's war.

We're kind of pissing in the wind here.
Those aren't the questions that need asking.
The political realities are really quite different.

Old women & men & children
they were targeted by bombardment
of the so called Allied planes.

This is not going to make a difference
in the prosecution of the bruised faces
that show the brutal side of this war.

The media is hardly a cheerleader
& is making life difficult for the
generals. After all, whose war is it?

There's a small minority that seems
to be getting a lot of attention.
Why give them so much time? We don't
get any because we're not out marching.
We're going to work.

If you have an opinion we're
anxious to hear from you.

The Kuwaiti leader has about 80 wives
& spends his life in a casino. I don't
see why we should go & die for him.

Why this? Why that? Everywhere you dial
coverage seems lopsided. What right do they
have to walk up to a military base & demand
information to sell their cornflakes?

We don't need the pressure
that comes from dying needlessly.
The people of this country have
a right to firsthand news.
Why don't we get to see the hate
propagated in this war firsthand?

1/21/91 #2 Eighty Percent Accuracy

Eighty percent accuracy? What
of the other twenty percent?
Cloud cover makes it hard to
find the target resulting in

civilian casualties. Right
to know as much as possible
without sacrificing ability
of the military to do the job.

Soliloquies of footage,
anti-aircraft cantata
soaring through the
bottle green light.
Something almost
majestic among the
few riveting visions
of what is, after all,
not simply another
television fantasy.

Difficult to sort the
random harmonics of
orchestrated coverage
in order to hear phrases
of a strange music in
the process of emerging.

Must insist to myself
this is somehow new,
not simply a replay
of hackneyed themes;
force myself to listen
deeply for what it is
which is the thread
granting coherence to
fragments & cannot be
identified since nameless.

Showing the video now.
The Scud is still smoking.
If psychological warfare,
as they seem to infer,
it seems to be on target.
Told Israelis don't like to

show a lot of public emotion
but this seems to tick them off.

To be resumed in full fury
soon as the weather allows.

1/21/91 #3 Sermon to the Snakes

I whisper my truth to snakes
where I lie under a small
outcrop of rock drinking
the taste of shadow like water.

My homeland is a place they
will not remember my name
after an efflorescent memorial.
But for now, I was rarely alive.

I have believed what the others
believed, knowing nothing better.
I spoke their speech and worked
typical hours to make their money.

Now I am wiser than their wisest,
knowing what none of them know,
though they preach it in my name:
What it means to speak to snakes.

To speak to snakes where
there are no snakes, only
the phantom of something
coiling around my mind.

I whisper my truth to snakes
where I lie under a small
outcrop of rock drinking
the taste of shadow like water.

1/21/91 #4 Morning Report
flipping around the channels

U.N. To prevent
the toll from rising
further we ask you to
please reconsider the
communique of January 15.

U.S. This is not the
time for diplomacy.

USSR: We open up the society.
We open up the country.
Leave us alone with our
conscience to solve
this tough problem.

CNN: We're told to quit
reporting any weather
data from the mid-east.
Here is the satellite map,
Make your own forecast.

U.K. Within a matter of seconds
the base was quiet, almost eerie.
Hopefully we've done some damage.
All good stuff. Hello to another day.

The Admiral reminds us:
this is not a video game.

Israel: the United States should
compensate us for war damage
in excess of 3 billion dollars.

Pentagon: After 5
& a half days we
continue to be
very encouraged.

POW's Brother: I agree
with our president. We
should stay the course.

Commodities Market:
Light sweet crude is
trading at 20 dollars
& 35 cents a barrel.

1/22/91 #1 Patience

I bring you only dog brains
but I promise a day will come
when I will bring you its tail.

A swelling chorus of patriotism.
Polls show supporters outnumber
protestors by intimidating factors.
Flag factories are sewing overtime.
Star spangled T-shirts moving fast.
Too soon to tell if the epidemic is
lasting or only a passing backlash.
Iraqis had another sleepless night
wondering what will fall from the sky.

I bring you dog brains but
I promise the day comes
when I bring you its feet.

Fight AIDS not Arabs say
protestors infiltrating Dan
Rather's studio. We'll go
to a commercial now - -

I always bring you dog brains
but I promise a day will come
when you will feed on its belly.

1/22/91 #2 Day Seven Begins

Regarding a ground
campaign: you wanta
throw as many rocks
from the hill as you can
before you go down,
start slugging it out.

Everybody's hungry
for information now.
'Long about Ramadan,
thirsty for water & a
place out of the sun.

Harassment
bombs full of
combs & tissue
exploding with
tones of kazoo.
Brilliantine bombs
to leave enemies
with hair slicked
into pompadours.
Bird, bone &
caterpillar bombs.

We cannot
comment
on that.

1/22/91 #3 Overall Strategy

The overall strategy has
become a source of some
puzzlement in Washington.

Some of them be thinkin'

that ol' coot wiley like a fox.
Some be sayin' he wants
to bore us to death'n then
kick sand in our face.

He don't say nothin'.
Why he don't?

Next he be sayin'
"do anything you
want to me, blow
up my airplanes,
but please, please
don't make me fight
a ground war."

Next he be puttin'
cherry bombs
down the toilet
in the Hilton.
Blooey - crap
everywhere.
What kind of
crazy is he?
Plenty crazy,
I think.

1/22/91 #4 Press Restrictions
(extracts of a dialogue among reporters)

You get a free trip in,
a free trip out. You get
a free tour of the place.
You're free to ask any
question you want.
They're free to answer
if they want which
they generally don't
unless it reflects well

& some general
doesn't want to say
it first to 650 journalists.

The story is big enough
we don't need to know
the secret schedules;
we want to know what
the General is feeling at
a given time & you can't
go back & get that later.

We have tightly sealed
doors facing the sea.
Can you do your job?
Not as it should be done.

There's blame on both sides.
In some cases there's
truth to their paranoia.
Some of us have gone ballistic,
causing panic both here & at home.

We want to give them
the flavor of the war.
We want to bring
them here in the
thick along with us
so that anyone with
enough compassion
can feel the fear -
fall with every plane
shot out of the sky.

Because, like it or not,
we're all as much at war
as our military deputies.
It wasn't just an army
that went to battle -
it was a country.

Tomorrow it might
even be a world.

*(n.b.3/96: first hint of a major stategic misdirection)

1/22/91 #5 Conflicting Stories

The news is both good & bad today.
Good news is that there isn't that
much bad news. Bad news is that
there isn't any good news to speak of.

Stocks slipped but not that much.
Light sweet crude rose a little.

The factory wasn't what it seemed.
It had barbed wire, armed soldiers,
maybe biological warfare equipment.

They said it was the only source
for making infant formula.
Anyway, someone blew it up
so the point is moot.

Ah, sweet crude rose!
Terror becomes mundane.

No U.S. planes lost in combat
last forty eight hours though
two crashed for other reasons.
Iraq says they shot them down.
Israel shows continued restraint.

"I would make the strongest
appeal that these prisoners be
treated properly in accordance
with Geneva Conventions."

A number of POW's reportedly

moved to strategic points to act as
human shields to discourage attack.

Activists plan to block
Grand Central Station.
Next a look at oil markets.
Texaco stock up. Need
an additional 30 billion
to bail out Savings & Loans.

This concludes the morning report.

1/23/91 #1 Extracts of a Briefing

Let me begin by expressing pride.
I urge caution especially in
expecting victory too soon.
The press reporting on the
press reporting on a story
usually means they've
run out of things to say.
I'll try to correct that.
Facts, figures, facts, figures,
facts, figures, joke, figures.
We've carefully chosen our
targets & bombed them with
precision, unlike the enemy.
There may be surprises.
Now the Admiral will speak.

I would also like to express pride,
dampen out the oscillations
between euphoria & distress &
provide for security of the region.
Behind schedule due to bad weather.
Notwithstanding we are pleased with
week one. About what we expected.

We've done:this, that

& some other things.
Facts, figures, excuses,
no joke, figures, facts.
Putting all that together,
Iraq hasn't done jack but
I don't want to give away
too much information.

First we cut it off then we kill it.
The more we cut off, the more we kill.

We've got a lot of tools & we
brought them all to the party.
For the most part they're dug in,
sitting there, waiting to be attacked.
Anecdotal evidence of low morale.
We don't know how bad we've
hurt it until it starts to move.
I've laundered this so you don't
really know what I'm talking
about, but trust me. Trust me.
Saddam has not thrown a single
military punch. Only terror tactics.
.I've had some crude
line drawings made,
accurate representation of
what I cannot tell you about
almost looks like. We destroyed it.
In conclusion, we're in no hurry.

1/23/91 #2 Spoilsport

The U.N. Security Council
has just pointed out that
the intent of their resolutions
was to make Iraq back off,
not to pulverize them
into powder. By the way, the
neighbors are getting nervous.

The disinformation
analyst states that
his specialty is
something we
don't engage in.
This has been
falsely confirmed
by independent sources
& can be trusted or not
depending on you affiliation.

Hang in there.

1/23/91 #3 Maybe

A deep feeling implicit
in reports lately that
Saddam's got something
up his sleeve. Maybe
terror around the world.

Maybe nukes,
chemicals
or biologicals.

Maybe sheer
nightmare power;
some strange
Arabian magic.

Maybe he's insane.
Maybe he's not insane.
Maybe he plans to do
certain devilish things
to destroy the economy.
Maybe he knows a way
to get each of us personally.

Maybe he'll ruin the
atmosphere & cause
the crops to fail or send
an oil slick clear to China.

Maybe he'll opt for
a peaceful settlement
& obligingly attend
a war crimes trial.

Maybe he'll join
a rock band.

1/23/91 #4 Bush: State of the Union Address

Our thoughts go out
to an allied force
standing up for
what is right.

We did not begin
a war 7 days ago -
we began to end a war.

At stake not simply
energy, economics,
stability of a vital region,
but prospects for peace
& a new world order.

Countries from 6 continents
sent forces to the Gulf.
Peace at any price
was never an answer.

Every overture of peace
met with open contempt.
Despite world's prayers
he brought war on himself.

Our pinpoint attacks
put him out of the
nuclear business for
a long time to come.

We're depriving Saddam of his
ability to wage war effectively.
Severely degrading his air defense.

Still 20,000 anti-aircraft
guns in Baghdad alone.
There can be no pause.
We will stay the course
& succeed all the way.

War is never cheap or easy.
There will be more
setbacks, more sacrifices.

He sickens the world
with tools of terror
that do nothing but
strengthen our resolve
to act against
a dictator unmoved
by human decency.

Saddam may yet become
a target of his own people.
Clearly immoral,he takes hostages,
attacks population centers,
threatens prisoners,
is without pity.

Repulsive parade of American airmen on TV.
I knew as they read their statements
that these were false statements
forced on them by their captors
because these guys are Americans!

I repeat my pledge.
Never again will
ourarmed forces be
sent out to do a job
with one hand tied
behind their back.

Not just military
but moral support.
They will return to
the love & respect
of a grateful nation.

All life is precious,
yet so too are the
living principles of
liberty & peace which
Americans cherish
above all others.
May God bless the
United States of America.

1/23/91 #5 Day Eight Begins

Now I know what I did
not know a week ago.
Last week's innocence is
not this week's innocence.
Next week's innocence
will be a different innocence.

Big things are happening.
Ennui succumbs abruptly
to interesting times. We
proceed to the next room.
A strange music emerges.

It was pretty clear we

needed to talk but for
some reason we didn't.
So here we are. Nothing
to do about it but watch.

Today's innocence is
not yesterdays innocence.
That much could be foretold.

1/23/91 #6 Cost Effective
(my suss so far)

There are good wars
& there are bad wars.

This war is said
to be a good one.

The one before is
generally conceded
to have been bad
because inefficient.

This war is said
to be efficient
but past a certain
point will not
be cost effective.

A war need not
be cost effective
to be a good war.

No war which is
lost could be said
to be cost effective
unless the loser
gains economically
by the fact of losing.

We discourage this.

1/24/91 #1 Israeli Ambassador's Address
(extract)

This could again become
the Garden of Eden,
not the hub of conflict.
Whatever reality there
will be when this war
is over, it is not our
intention to rule the
so called Palestinians
against their will but
we don't want them
to determine our future.
Ten years along the road
there may be other arrangements.

We did not request
thirteen billion dollars
(from the international alliance
to refrain from retaliation.)
This is a canard.

Directly or indirectly
our damage amounts to
3.2 billion because of
tourism eliminated,
civil defense necessity,
higher price of energy,
loss of product,
transportation,
insurance,
planes in the air
around the clock -
not including the damage
of the last couple of days.

Just as other countries
have been compensated by
the international community,
hopefully so will we.

Not a request, not a demand.
We are absorbing immigrants
at a time when the world is
in a recession. We are not
going to ask for direct loans.
We have explained our
needs & hope for help.

There are wise people
among the Palestinians
who must realize violence
accomplishes nothing.
And yet they never
miss an opportunity
to miss an opportunity.

1/24/91 #2

Ally

gerund: a word which
has the characteristics
of both verb & noun.

Allied with terrorists &
feudal monarchies, what
is a sensible foreign policy?

Two million people
kicking in ten bucks
apiece could keep
this war going for
another three days.

Or one million kicking
in twenty. Or two
kicking in ten million.

Antiseptic war;
thousands dying,
no bodies seen.
Upset the public.
Might not go for it.

Media saturation.
Spoonfed military
viewpoint, statistics,
evasions to present
war in the best light.

Calls to the White House
1,000 to 1 against letting
Media have their own way
say White House sources.
No censorship in Viet Nam.
Generals have not forgotten.

Day eight is a day of digression.
Not a lot happening that's much
different from what's happened
before - except more of it.

So far as is known today marks
the first battle of the war
to produce a double kill
by a single pilot. A record.
Made a point of this.

1/24/91 #3 Arabian Briefing

Let me tell you first
the initial information
we receive. And explain.

This process will take time.

They were going
parallel to the coast.
The F15 pilot confirm
that he was engage
& kill both airplanes.

The pilot report
he doesn't see
any ejection pilot
from the F1 but we
can't confirm
that he do not eject
or he do eject.

We will see what the tape
contain before we
releasing the tape.

Since the war break down
the Saudi none of them
shot down any Iraqi.

Before one F4
or probably two F4
we shot before
long time ago.

This is information
we try to provide you
at the moment now
but as I report it
we just can't tell
where it's going.

If you don't mind we
just give more chance
for more questions
to the other subjects.

I really can't confirm it
until we go through the
whole process of
the air defense from
the early warning to
the command & control
to the pilot debrief
to the tape of the F15
to the air control till we
struck the information
together so it can be confirmed.

It was an engagement
to kill the two F1's.
Thank you very much.

Our religion asks us
to fight & pray
at the same time.

1/24/91 #4 British Briefing

Ladies & gentlemen, good day.
Thank you for attending.
Momentum has been maintained
& good progress made.

The RAF has flown
numerous sorties
against combat air
patrols in the North.

Careful positioning
of fighting units
in preparation
for a possible
ground offensive.

offensive actions
deep inside Iraq

with pinpoint accuracy.

The crew are missing in action.
Next of kin have been informed.
There are no further details.

- dropped high explosive
bombs & claimed
%100 success rate -

HMS Gloucester & HMS Cardiff
were mounting early warning
surveillance operations when their
radar operators detected the
approach of three hostile aircraft.

I can confirm that two
of these aircraft were
intercepted & destroyed
by Saudi fighters.
The third fled to base.

More information is
coming on in this but
so far the operation
seems to be going to plan.

The army is
consolidating
its position.

No particular theme.
Variation of tactics
is a normal process.
We have used a variety of profiles
& it has no bearing
on the loss rate.

It's been going
particularly well
in that respect.

1/24/91 #5 Day Nine Begins

Turn off the box
& play a little
soothing music.
Digest my dinner
before checking
any more reports.

A strange music -

a bar or two
every day –
sometimes an
articulate phrase
but never
a whole theme.

Riffs aplenty but
they fall away
from the body of it,
exchangeable
like grace notes
in a Mozart sonata.

Precision & accuracy.
Surgical & pinpoint.
Pinpoint precision
& surgical accuracy.

Rode my bike to
the City & back
just for fresh air.
No fresher there

but that isn't
the point, is it?

My very peculiar
contribution to
the war effort
is to try to hear
how strange music
sounds from 12,000
miles away with
pinpoint accuracy.

1/24/91 #6 Between & Besides

Wars within War:
media & military,
networks & CNN
TV & the press,
Islam, Judaism
& Baptist Christianity,
economist & humanist;
idealist & utilitarian
exchanging garments.

The night wears on.
I want to say all or
nothing else about it
but must just settle
for finding some sense.

Got to thinking how
the land between the
Tigris & Euphrates
was home to Babylonians,
Parthians & Sumerians.

Fertile Crescent,
civilization's cradle.

How it was a world center
of art & scholarship
until Muslim conquest
in the 7th century.

How the Dark Ages
befell the Western World.

How life is a
combination of
inert elements
and Holy Fire.

1/25/91 #1 Tide of Oil

Unctuous slooshing
of buttery waves slip
over oleaginous sand
with voice of molasses,

thirty six hours
of continuous spillage
have transformed the
beach of Al Khafji into
an oil surfer's paradise.

Burgeoning clouds
in raven plumage ride
the stark Arabian sky,
black as blood by moonlight.

War of winds and
winds of war no less
than words of wind
beleaguer the tide.

These are my arms
and this is my blood,

this poisonous mire
the love of the leech
to suck you dry.

Oh mighty of the Earth
behold in horror for
I have riven my mark
on wind and sea and sky.

1/25/91 #2 Jihad

Religion give us
the spirit to fight
where other people
think it's mad to fight.

You can't separate
people here from
the role of religion.
Not a conflict among
nations but of souls.

Jihad
Jihad
Jihad

How to stop
dependence
on foreign oil?
Texaco says:
proper tire
inflation can
save 4,000,000
gallons of gas a day.

Jihad
Jihad

Restore rights

& freedom.
Proceed with
the idea of
bringing peace
to the region.

Jihad

Bush has more
understanding of
what will restore
peace to the area
than any President
in recent history says
the Vice President.

He is calm.
He is serene.
He gives the
impression
of a leader
who knows
he's doing
the right thing.
Jihad

1/25/91 #3 Day Ten Begins

absorbing generalities
about day nine /
Every third statement
is disinformation.
Don't lose count.

Who is the most right,
Pentagon or the Press?

...backing off after
a dose of reality...

What will
the defining
statement be?
You thought
war was Hell?
Watch this!
Is it true
that bastard shot
his commanders
just like that:
bangbangbangbangbang?
Jesus!

Point of the oil spill
may be to destroy the
enemy to the South
as badly as he is being
destroyed by Allies.
The Germans taught
him how to make gas.
Valdez taught him how
to decapacitate a gulf.

Gulf 'em,
gas 'em
n' get out.

Not showing his hand yet
just crazy stupid stink bombs
across the Western border.

Another month
of airwar? Two?
Do not dare
go down there
on the ground.
No, no, no, not yet.

1/25/91 #4 The Singing Dog

Never before
has the world
witnessed the
beginning of
such a war as
the world has
never before
witnessed

attack from
the East less
attractive due
to oil dark sea

blame unclear
for now in the
fog of words

it's hard to
have no opinion,
to realize facts
are malleable,
origins lost in
obscurity even
to perpetrators
but with practise
even dogs can
learn to sing

May want to
return the genii
to the bottle but
may need another
genii to do it.

1/25/91 #5 Saturday Morning Reports
(extracts)

We have quite a good
track record; contrary
to reports of the press,
every once in awhile
we really hit the target.

Probably been 2
or 3 thousand
civilian casualties
caused by corollary
damage; it's inevitable.

Compared to previous wars
it's a huge, huge improvement.

They field masses of
cannon fodder with
low value for human life.
Our casualties will be low,
thanks to technology.

30 miles long,
8 miles wide,
heading South,
parts of the oil
slick are on fire.

Security up for tomorrow's
Super Bowl in Tampa, Fla.

Fighter pilots report seeing
a huge fire ball after their
attack on Republican Guards.

2 bombs explode near
U.S. Embassy in Turkey.
Thousands of people
gather on the Capitol Mall
to chant for peace.

According to Gallup Polls,
62 percent think the
fighting will last for months.
45 percent are for use
of nuclear weapons -
45 percent are for use
of nuclear weapons!
45 percent are for use
of nuclear weapons,
the same percent against.
76 percent say this
is not Armageddon.
The poll has a margin
for error of plus or
minus 4 percentage points.

1/26/91 #1 The Nobel Laureate Speaks
(extract of Elie Weisel conversation)

To bear witness
will be my task.
To try to tell the tale.
To be here in such
hours of anguish,
hours of danger.

We hear certain
words today and
the words bring
back memories -
they evoke
a landscape of death.
A landscape of solitude.

A few hundred miles
from here is a man
mad with hatred,
mad with vengeance,

mad with vanity,
who has openly
proclaimed his wish
to destroy this people.
He has kept his promises.

We must be prudent.

1/26/91 #2 Sounds of Protest
(Washington D.C.Mall Rally)

Keep hope alive
Free the troops
No blood for oil
Sanctions should
have been given
time to work
Why do we fight for
an autocratic monarchy
where women have no rights?
Why did we invade Granada?
Why did we invade Panama?
What are we doing in Central
America supporting the death
squad in El Salvador–
What are we doing in
Honduras & in Nicaragua?
Ninety percent of Congress
is white males
Why are women excluded
from the combat troops?
Down with war up with peace!
Out of the Middle East!
Bush, you created him &
you should go & fight him
& send our children home!
We don't need to wave
the flag, it waves in us
All the lost children
& the lost mothers

please go to the first aid
center on my right hand side
Let us take strength
from each others presence
This is an unnecessary war
African Americans will
be the first to die & we
can't get a civil rights bill
in our own country
Give peace a chance
Whose side is God on?
As the war escalates
so will the resistance
War is not the answer!
Shut down the gas stations!
Call for international conference!
Boycott every product
advertised by a media that
keeps us from hearing the truth
When will they ever learn?
We shall overcome!
The movement is back!

1/26/91 #3 Day Eleven Begins

War becomes an organ of perception.
By day 11 I see nearly everything
in terms of it. Values shifting.
Like the process of grief,
where everything light-hearted
seems vaguely obscene.
Wanton. Misinformed. Self-accusing.

Most waking hours absorbed between
TV reports & writing them up.
Deaf ear to family's protests.
Eyes of obession in the mirror.
The war grabbed me unawares
from the moment of my initial

attempt to record it & just
held on. Within a week or so
I knew I was doomed to seek
some sort of understanding
through it which is denied
to works of the imagination.

Horses of change appear
most every hour if I care
to mount them. Most run
into walls or stumble in
holes & ought to be shot.
What is called editing.

Impossible to empathize
with all points of view,
but I try to do it as they
are made manifest to me,
then let them slide away.

As for value, by the time this
thing is over few will wish to
think of it, much less read an
account of it's impacted nuances.
That is for some later time.
I think not I. But it seems
it should be witnessed in
some cohesive way - letting
it suggest its own form as
the shape of battle defines
itself over course of time.

1/26/91 #4 Stormin' Norman's briefing

Thirty-nine enemy planes
sought sanctuary in Iran.
The allies lost no planes
in the last two days.
We've bombed the manifold

controlling the pipes
& hopefully sealed off
spillage of oil into the gulf.

The appropriate weapon
for the appropriate target.
No question civilians
are going to get hit -
we're doing everything
we can to prevent it
but it's going to happen.

Not said before: we're
endangering our pilots
trying to avoid shrines
& civilian casualties.

Our war is not
against the people.

Accidents happen.
I've been bombed by
our own airforce.
I don't think they
did it intentionally.

I'm a conservationist
but I'm certainly not
an ecological engineer.
I don't know the impact
of the oil spill down
the line but I think it's
a ridiculous argument
that we should stop
fighting a despot in order
to not pollute the shores.

1/27/91 #1 Sunday Kind of War

It's a Sunday kind of coverage.
Land mines are there to channelize you
& direct you into the killing zone.
You pick this up you eat
five pounds of explosives.
Never veer off the clear path.
They've laid half a million since August.

The Super Bowl is raging in Tampa.
Whitney blew the Anthem off the map.
When the 49ers lost last week in the
playoffs I had a hunch it'd be a long war.
Giants haven't generated much of a pass
rush with 7:53 left to play in the first half.

When's the last time you saw a fair catch
on a 55 yard punt? Baghdad says they're
holding back their forces & haven't yet
begun to launch their crushing strikes.
Will it be poison gas or an A-Bomb?
If Israel joins, so will Iran.
The clock stops for the two minute warning.

The air war continues completely one sided.
No hurry to begin a ground campaign. Given
mishandling & poor field position they'll
probably opt to run out the clock. Halftime.

The game began past two in the morning.
No liquor here so they had soda, popcorn
& gas-masks. 'Good evening from the White
House to everyone enjoying the game. God bless
all freedom loving people around the world.'

Dawn is now breaking over the Persian Gulf.
Back for the second half. Got to break
a tackle & make something happen.
Every now & then you can look back
to a play that turned everything around.
Some guys just get there quicker than others.

Longest drive in Super Bowl history. 9:29.
Coca Cola feels it would be inappropriate to
run a light-hearted commercial at this time.
Unprecedented security around Tampa Stadium.
Scuds, rockets & missile launchers. Stay
with us for the post game show. Soldiers &
tanks from the Kremlin do routine police work
as the Soviet economy goes into freefall.

Trying to kick his
longest ever on grass
Eight seconds left.
He misses. They lose.

1/27/91 #2 Day Twelve Begins

Keep meaning to get back to work
on subjects other than the war,
only to find there are no subjects
other than the war. Seduced by
the subject of a strange music
in the act of emergence I find
myself listening to themes more
ancient than recorded history.

The music I heard, or
thought I heard, was the
music of the emergence,
of the first days,

and it was truly there,

the harmonics of a startled
nation as it began to mobilize
its opinions, the chance for
a voicing never before heard, an
unsuspected aspect of harmony,
to affect the structure & cadence.

It was bits of the primal chord
I heard, all possible semi-tones
compressed into a chord filtered
through the reductive receptors
of auditory sense. But it was there.
.
I confused it with music
& wasn't absolutely wrong
though not what I'd call correct.

But what am I saying?
Am I certain this has
been a misadventure?
Maybe it's only weariness
of long daily participation.
Maybe the suspicion that
war does not, cannot,
offer anything new.

There are probably things
worth enduring monumental
futility for. Is this one of them?
I suspect it might be so.
I suspect it may not.

If one emergent music,
one not heard before,
should positively sound,
then victory is assured.

A victory of
perception,
not of war.

1/27/91 #3 Airport Security#
(extracts)

A group of reporters
passed a lead lined bag

containing bomb-like
components through
airport baggage 50 times
before they gave up.

You can be part of the
aviation security business.
Things you can do to help:
Leave no unattended bags.
If you've left your bag with
a porter, double-check it.
Keep your bag in your
possession at all times.
Put an identifying mark
on your bag so no one
can pull a switch on you.
Know what you're carrying,
even bombs given you by friends.

Leave electronic items at
home if you don't need them
or carry them onboard so we
don't have to screen them.
Don't dress like an Arab.

There's lots of other things
we could tell you to do
but we can't talk about them
or we'd show our hand.

1/27/91 #4 Major Highlights of Today's Briefing

More than eighty of
their planes have
flown to Iran. How
come we don't know
what they're up to?
Is there a shortfall
of intelligence?

We don't know
everything &
that's one of them.

We have to be able
to see it, feel it,
taste it & touch it
before we'll report
that it happened.

You may characterize that
as a current operation
but we're not doing it now;
it's something we might do
& therefore it's a future
operation & I can't discuss it.

I think we have tried
very hard throughout
this operation
not to get out here
with lots of statements.

1/28/91 #1 Saudi Ambassador Speaks

The oil slick isn't going to hurt us.
It is purely & simply a crime against
nature; against birds & fishes.Until
this time we thought Saddam was not
human because he was so cruel to humans.
Now we're not even sure he's an animal.

He's invented a military rank
for himself called the Awesome,
something above a field marshall
and slightly below an emperor.
We prefer to call him the Awful.

He didn't say anything new
in his interview - all threats
we've heard before. He talks
exclusively about lakes of blood,
about hundreds of thousands
of civilians being killed.
He's really deranged & thinks
about nothing but blood.

I have met him a few times.
He is a master of deceit.
You would blush if you heard
the praise I used to hear from him.
Is this same man who is telling
all the world about Saudi Arabia?

We have seen everything he has
in his arsenal. We have seen how
he rapes, how he kills, how he
pillages, how brutal he is, we
have seen everythin that the cruelty
of man has invented throughout ages.
If he has chemical or biological
weapons he will try to use them.
He lives on intimidation & blackmail.

Q: Are you glad Israel took out
his nuclear plant in 1981?

I am not proud of anything Israel has done.
If they satisfy the Palestinian demands
we can talk about being proud of them.

Sending his planes to Iran is one
of what he thinks are clever tricks.
He hopes the coalition will
go & hit them & get Iran involved
in fighting the coalition. Like all
his tricks,this one is going to backfire.

We will kick this aggressor out of Kuwait
We will have an era of peace & stability
because the new world order will be working
as expected under the UN charter since there
will be no cold war tearing the world apart.
The big five will oversee the security
of the world and, I really hope, this
will be the last dictator causing all this
disruption & we will approach an era of peace.

1/28/91 #2 Day Thirteen Begins

Got to get away from the war,
listen to some instrumental tracks
before I lose perspective.

CNN Correspondents
will update me later.
My brothers, my sisters,
mon semblable, my guides.

It ain't going away.
It's here for a spell.
Learn how to ignore it
every once in awhile.

Learn how to look at it
from the point of view
of an extraterrestrial
taking protozoa specimens.
Don't let it take me over.

Look at it from an
interstellar viepoint/
a temporary skirmish
on a minor planet
with too much oil
and not enough.

A strange music emerges
after a brief respite.
To not lose sight of that.
To keep it within hearing.

1/28/91 #3 Fighting For God

Dead birds in his hair
Oil between his toes
He's fighting for God
Black wind in his lungs
Promising lakes of blood
He's fighting for God

His confidence is absolute
He's fighting for God
The major battle is yet to come
He's fighting for God
He's doing interviews on TV
He's fighting for God
He's moving his airforce to Iran
He's fighting for God

He's got chemical weapons
He's got biological weapons
He's fighting for God
He's got nuclear warheads
He'll use whatever's needed
He's fighting for God

His people fear him
His soldiers desert him
He's fighting for God
He kills his commanders
He's fighting for God
Sworn enemy of Satan
He's fighting for God

1/29/91 #1 Face of Evil

Hard to look at the Dictator
& not like him instinctively.
He looks like an uncle from
Mother's side of the family
or a greengrocer who sells
reasonably good lettuce, not
the kind with bugs inside.

I think he believes in
what he's doing, without
the shadow of a question.
Maybe that's a basic trait
of leaders from which
springs the necessity
for mistrusting them in
negotiation & compromise.

On the other hand, our own leader
is not so easy to like on sight,
though you don't instinctually
want to put a pie in his face
the way you did with, say,
Joe McCarthy or Richard Nixon.
His faith seems facile to me.

Listening to the Dictator,
I can despise the intent
of his words, their results,
the blind self-servingness
of them, but how despise
the apparent faith that
marshalls them into action?

This same simple faith
pitted against the less
simple faith of others
is likely, if anything is,
to cost us the results of

a millenium's experiment
in the possibilities of
culture, art & civilization.

1/29/91 #2 Day Fourteen Begins

Sitting here waiting for
the heralded interview
with the Dictator.
State of the Union
Address was given
and, as predicted,
Star Wars (SDI)
bids fair to jump
back in the budget
leaving us free to rule
the world with integrity,
secure against reprisals.

I understand the rationale but
wings feel mighty good to flap.
Invincibility spells ruination
from within rather than without.

The Dictator feels protected
by the hand of God & dares
his outrageous actions in
the name of righteousness.

Got to wrap this up now.
The Dictator speaks.
I must attend.

1/29/91 The Dictator's Interview

Ouch! Clearing my mind
of preconceptions &
listening to him I find

myself mighty confused.
What can I record except
the confusion? What can
I know for sure? Be honest,
then, to my perception &
let it tumble from my hands.

He sounds
so plausible,
so reasonable,
so honorable,
so right. Yet,
what about Kuwait?

I thought: why does he
blink so much? Nerves?
Exhaustion? Then I realized
the light was in his eyes.
He wore a suit & tie.
He talked about the power
of right against seemingly
insurmountable odds. Like
the father of a country. Yet,
what about Israel? It seems
it's all about the Western
Bank & the Golan Heights.
Yes, but what about Kuwait?

What about the allegedly
corrupt regime he displaced,
allegedly raping & pillaging
the region in the process?

It's going to take a while
for this all to sink in. No
doubt if I turn on my TV
they'll tell me exactly how
to view it all. A master
of deceit; a megalomaniac;
a lunatic living in delusions.

Perhaps all this is true but
what, just what, have I to
base my own perceptions on?

Let me put it this way:
at this moment,
knowing how little I know,
were I armed and
in a room with him,
guards drugged,
provided with a clear
avenue of escape,
I could not
pull the trigger.
Who knows the measure
of these things?

I began to suspect
that this war is about
entirely other matters
than one bereft of inside
information might guess.

Though others emphatically
affirm that point of view,
they speak from agendas
whose bias is diverse
and whose pertinance
is inconclusive.
The appearance of
patent paradox invites
my estimation of mistrust
within a framework of
essential ignorance.
This sounds like a textbook
definition of classic paranoia.

My initial interest and concern
begins to resemble an infection
of some species of viral madness.

1/29/91 #4 The General

The General hits the podium
like a beach head, glances
around the room uneasily,
slips on his glasses, slaps
open his notes & commences.

He leaves no doubt we've
hit 'em pretty hard as usual.
Facts, figures, things it's
important to take note of.

Norman is no actor. What he says
is so, you may depend on it.
This is the horse's mouth itself
replete with charts & videos.

Watching him this morning, I begin
to feel ashamed at the empathy I felt
for the enemy & his plight last night.
An insidious attack of pacifism.

The General is shaped like an egg.
War is a hard boiled affair.
He makes it quite clear he does
not approve of body counts. They
mean nothing. Absolutely nothing,
only tend to mislead people about
what's going on, puts undue pressure
on commanders to come up with
numbers that are essentially unreal.

The General is beyond morality
in his official capacity, though
plainly not as an individual. He
is here to do a job & does it to
the best of his considerable ability.

Morality is left to the Oval Office.
Who can fault him on that account?
'War is not a clean business' he
remarks & takes the next question.

The glasses are off now & he
has a hunted look in his eyes.
What are these reporters driving at?
What are they trying to get out of me?
"Is this a question or a statement,
OK? I need to know!" he chastises.
The warrior steps out of the face
behind the military briefer's mask.

"I would describe that report,"
he snorts "as bovine scatology!"

1/30/91 #1 Strategic Bull Session

Can airpower do the job alone?
Will Iraq crack after a couple
more weeks of air strikes?
Three thousand sorties a day?
.
Is this more of a political war where
failure to secure early capitulation
is tantamount to victory for the
decimated 3rd world force challenged?

Is it ime to get down on the ground
& start thrashing it out? Or just
continue cutting off supplies until
nothing is needed but a mop up?

Should an end sweep be made,
avoiding the Kuwaiti front,
aiming for Central Iraq,
straight toward Baghdad so
Republican Guards must

leave defensive positions?
Are they weakened enough
to consider that tactic yet?

Maybe waiting is no good
for fear the coalition will
fall apart, or some political
surprise present itself to
subvert the orchestration.

1/30/91 #2 Day Fifteen Begins

Why is it being fought?
I mean, this one rather
than some other one?

Why aren't troops down
in Tin Pan Alley fighting
for better music? Or
in the volcano making
snowmen out of lava?

Assuming victory,
what has been won?
A happier Kuwait?
O Joy. Or the right
to participate in
something endless
involving those people
who wear red & white
checkered dishtowels &
are not pleased with Israel?

Is compromise possible?
Can't tell the Palestinians
to go home. They are home.
Can't send Ex-Soviet Jews
home; they don't have one.

Why is the U.S. making this
problem its major thrust of
interest & expenditure when
its inner cities are exploding
& its schools are down the drain?

I conclude that I must be
immensely thick & missing
something painfully obvious.
There are even better causes
on foreign horizons if it comes
to that. Who benefits from this?

Don't give me patriotic reasons.
Wave the flag but keep explaining.

1/30/91 #3 Going For It

Robin Wright says the biggest worry is that we might win the war but lose the peace because we lack post gulf strategies on a host of issues ranging from security on Saudi Arabia & Kuwait to the future of Iraq, to the Arab-Israeli conflict, to the disparity between the super rich & the super poor. There's commitment but no ideas & clearly no leadership. That sounds convincing.

People outside a small circle of connoisseurs do not care who writes the President's speeches or even if he does it himself. Patriot rhetoric has a chilling sound to my ear in the time of war. Everything sounds differently here, even the plumbing. It is now the plumbing of war.

How do you get men to agree to possibly give their lives for something which, if honorable, is only incidentally so, its aim being economic & political, founded on several fortuitous but tenuous alliances? Iran eyes with a dim view any coalition with Satan while admitting Saddam is headstrong. Things would be more implacable if Khomeini were still alive, that is if war had happened at all, which it might not, balances being different.

An Ayatollah differs from a Pope in that a Pope may not officially order assassinations. Floggings & stonings are beyond his jurisdiction. He holds the keys to Hell & Heaven alone, not to the closets of adulterers. Nor does a Pope dictate state law. Otherwise they are probably very similar. Except the Pope is an Infidel.

There are also a lot of non-Catholic Infidels in this world. The President is one. Israelis for another. Dealing with Muslims is not like dealing with Unitarians.

1/30/91 #4 Late Check-in

The world cut into my war today -
things I'm previously engaged to do.
It's already after dark & all I've
caught is ten minutes of news.
Any significance to the feeling
that the war situation would go
haywire without my attention?
It seems to be rolling on course.

By this time of evening I'm generally
thoroughly briefed. As I write this
I'm rolling tape of the morning's
briefing from the British Military.
Facts, figures, facts, figures, attitude.
In one ear & out the other—wonder
if the Dicator gave us any footage today?

The PM of GB & the U.S.VP
on the steps of 10 Downing:

PM: The general strategy of the campaign has
been pretty clear. It's pretty clear what we
intend to do in future & we will stick to that.

VP: There is strong & overwhelming
support for the President & our policy.
The American people, perhaps contrary

to international public opinion,
have a great deal of patience.

Commentator: We heard very little new
from the Prime Minister & the Vice
President after their conversations
at the Prime Minister's residence.

The Saudis claim victory in Khafji,
first ground engagement of the war.
Reports of a coup attempt within
the Iraqi airforce probably not true.
Probably some significance to the fact
that senior officials have not been
speculating as to the motivations for
the ninety aircraft which flew to Iran.

Learning how to read what isn't there.

1/31/91 #1 Day Sixteen Begins

A ten mile column of Iraqi tanks
snakes toward the Saudi border.
After a two day lull, an Iraqi Scud
explodes on the Arab West Bank. Why?

Beirut bidding to join the fun
by peppering the "so called"
Israeli security buffer zone in
Southern Lebanon with artillery.

"The Iraqis are not losers & seem to be
able to play their cards rather astutely,"
says the French Ambassador to the U.S.

Irritating pseudo-Wagnerian music
between news & commercials.
Kitsch detail of Television War.

Is it true that Saddam would hold out
to the last Iraqi merely to gain headlines
embarrassing to the West? Or is this an
inscrutably Arabic stroke of consummate
strategy - to sit still doing nothing?

Allies win by pulverizing his army.
He wins by staying in it until they do.
What a nice war. Everybody wins!

If the Iraqi military is destroyed,
Iran, playing the neutrality game,
comes out a significant winner,
possessed of Iraq's air force,
-which the Dictator handed them of
his own freewill for safekeeping-
plus greatly enhanced sovereignty.

Assad is in the coalition for
calculating reasons. Iraq is
mucho pain in the neck to him
& he will gladly hold our coats
while we do what he cannot.

Mid-East balance of power
was abnormal in the mid '80's.
Three of the players were out.
Iraq & Iran neutralized their
forces in mutual warfare &
Egypt was out of the Arab League
after the Camp David Accord.

Assad in Syria & Khaddafi in Libya
had the stage to themselves awhile
but with the Iran-Iraq war over &
with Egypt back in the Arab League,
Libya & Syria must once again resign
themselves to lurk on the sidelines.

1/31/91 #2 Talking About It

Talked to a few people
outside my household
about the war today,
only the second time
in these two weeks,

sequestered as I am,
using the creation of
this document as focus
& semi-excuse for total
absorption in the subject.

Listening more than usual
to the opinions of others.
Since my own seem prone
to fluxuate with fresh
dis-information, I find
it difficult to keep any.

Opinions, that is.

I appear to harbor a vague
semi-resentful conviction
that the war isn't something
about which my opinions matter.
I fit into that tiny segment
designated as don't know
in the flood of opinion polls.

I've never been consulted
on an opinion poll – perhaps
were I to move to Iowa -

Sometimes it seems the warriors
know what they're up to,
in a larger sense, other times
war seems an ineluctable process -
the hammer fell, the bell was struck

& the bird flew out of the clanger
where it had built a nest & was
hatching eggs in a season of no bells.

Just as there are
ghosts in England
& wee folk in Erin,
there is fate in Arabia.

Those who know prophecy
act to insure that things go
down according to what is
written & incidentally
cover themselves in glory.

- a quest for transformation,
the fruit of ageless enduring,
reward for eating thousands of
years of sand while dreaming
of opulent Felaheen Heavens -

Can they calibrate that
into azimuth & deflection;
learn to lob a shell
where it does some good?

1/31/91 #3 Counter to Intelligence#

What is the Dictator smiling about
in the recent television footage of
himself & his cronies in high humor?
How does he continue to survive
despite intense aerial bombardment?
Not only survive but mount attacks?
The ancient art of deception?
To hide the true & show the false -

8 satellites constantly monitor
the region & can read a license

plate from space. So Iraq buries
communication links under sand.
They had plenty of time while
diplomatic channels were perused,
according to one pundit cynic,
who further leads us to understand

that as far back as '82 the U.S.
provided Iraq with intelligence
reports, informed them of their
vulnerabilities, taught them
reconnaissance techniques and
thoroughly advised them on
how to prepare for such a war.

After all, the Soviets were
the enemy then & backed Iran
in the old neighborhood dispute.
But now the cold war is over.

We are further advised by our
impeccable counselor that reports
of damage to civilian Baghdad are
exaggerated by a bunch of soreheads.

Renewed assaults on the Saudi border
despite earlier claims of Allied victory.
12 Marines died yesterday, unclear how.

Confusion & ambiguity reign as
large Iraqi convoys head south.
Even a minor victory is important.
Tired & demoralized, the Dictator's
troops may need to try something -
anything - is one general's analysis.

14 U.S. airmen missing
after a transport goes down
attempting to prevent the
columns of Iraqi convoys

from reaching the battlefield.
Tank & artillery duels.
"We do not conclude anything
significant is happening."

2/1/91 #1 Outburst

Standing on rubble, a Cruise
missile roaring overhead as
though on cue, an enraged
woman addresses millions of
viewers around the globe.
Dressed in an incongruous
white track suit, shaking an
angry index finger as though
at a flock of naughty children
who've just broken a window,
she harangues the camera -

"Mea culpa! Mea culpa!
All of you are responsible!
All of you!
Bombing the people!
Like a pack of boys!
As if we are red Indians!
We are human beings!
Who made this area like this?
Who is to blame in this area?
It's the West!
Mea culpa!
All of you and
the press as well!
You think it's like a game!
It is not a game!
Not with human life!
WITH HUMAN LIFE!
Children and women as well!
What is this?
The Roman Empire?!"

To offset the force of this
it is explained patiently:

"Allied Military officials
maintain they are doing
all they can to avoid
hitting civilian targets.
They suggest that Iraqi
efforts to shoot down the
missiles may be sending
the weapons off course."

2/1/91 #2 Battle for Khafji

Confusion about just what
the hell's going on. Iraqis
claim they've pulled back
across the border. The AP
reports Iraqi tanks crossed
over the Saudi border 50
miles west of Khafji &
that fighting continues.
U.S. briefers say they have
no details on such a move.

Inside Khafji, charred
Iraqi personnel carriers
contain the incinerated
remains of their crews.

Shock to finally see corpses
after 2 weeks of antiseptic
reporting. Does this mean
we're being prepared for
the actualities of the
coming ground offensive?

Body of a soldier against a wall,
head & shoulders missing,
rendered doubly eerie by the

green iridescence of moonlight
captured through a night lens.
Snipers roam the abandoned town.

Wounded prisoners,
filmed by French TV,
lie thin, apathetic,
bleeding & arrested.

500 captured.
300 killed.

Allied forces say they don't see
any military sense to the assault.

2/1/91 #3 Alpher Talks Strategy

(a précis)

Two hypothesis of Iraqi tactics based
on the assumption the Dictaror knows
he will lose the war militarily.

He'll try to wrest a political victory by
drawing Allied forces into the land war
before they're fully prepared & before
Iraqi forces in Kuwait have been fully
softened up, registering tactical gains
by causing heavy losses & taking prisoners.

Alternatively, given the diplomatic
activity taking place in the UN & in
Tehran, regardless of what he may
feel about the recent U.S.- Soviet
joint communique, he may be thinking
of accepting a cease fire & withdrawing
from Kuwait, but, before doing so,
to achieve something he could claim
to be a military victory, might grab
some Saudi Territory or cause fairly

heavy Allied losses, nevertheless
quitting the field with a good part
of his army intact so he can hold
his head high & claim he is acting
from strength rather than waiting
a few weeks more and withdrawing
due to a position of weakness.

He understood what sort of war
he was going into at the start.
He understands what sort of land
war he's attempting in Kuwait
& that he's not going to win it.
No matter his losses, by surviving
with his regime intact, he hopes to
appear to the Arab world as a hero
who stood up to a world coalition,
to the forces of both imperialism
& Zionism, presenting a challenge
to the Arab masses & especially
the Arab rulers siding against him.

Well, if he never considered these
off the wall strategies before, he's
kicking them over now, since it's
well known he watches CNN in his
hideaway deep underground. More than
likely, he's being force fed some
options in case he has none of his own.

Paradox prevails.

2/1/91 #4 Day Seventeen Begins

Turned on the radio passing
through the kitchen to put
the baby to bed & heard
about various groups getting
together to protest the war.
An AF of L workers rally.

A candlelight vigil for
Valentine's Day.

My head suddenly took a full
tilt & none of it figured.
It all suddenly seemed
on a par with "Citizens
Against the Stars," like
being against the ocean or
the storms that rage upon it.

In a moment of outstanding
clarity which I cannot and
will not justify, I realize
that war is a natural force.

I can't rationalize such
a statement - no more
than rationalize war.
Just suddenly seemed so
obvious & apparent that
no, we don't want it -
it happens, we blame
one another for it,
congratulate one another
during the apparent
pauses in its endlessness.

War is an irreducible
component of change -
runs counter to, but is
the product, of reason.

If radishes could reason
they would go to war. In
our collective megalomania.
we believe we either
start or stop them.
Skirmishes, perhaps,
are amenable to control.

War? I don't think so.
It keeps its own schedule.

I wonder how many others
had that realization today,
faced with the mounting
paradoxicality attended
by the chatter of pundits?

2/1/91 #5 The Choice

The choice now that
even CNN has put
the war on hold is

extended coverage
of an L.A. plane crash
& folks filter back

to normal work lives,
wishing they could
watch the war but

economically unable
to spend the time
(the time, the time)

it takes to do so -
the choice, as I
was saying before I

interrupted myself,
is whether to take
this moment to make

a clean break with war
& get back to normal
enterprises. Surprise!

There are no normal

enterprises. This really
is a war. It won't sink in.

Except in certain small
moments resembling alarm
where it becomes very real

& I'm left in outrage or
bemusement prepared for
another day of propaganda

waged by structuralists with
unerring miscalculation on
both the home & battlefront.

Sifted for a grain of sense
it seems to suggest that palm
trees don't grow in pavement.

2/1/91 #6 Vice-President's Update
(situation, extract & commentary)

Rained like hell all night &
continues to fall straight down
in solid sheets this morning.
Heard it was predicted due to
interference in the jet stream
by radiation from the Chernobyl
meltdown half a dozen years ago.
Such reasoning is frowned upon
by more responsible forecasters.

The Vice President's update
for this Groundhog Day 1991:
"Weeks & months - not years.
This is not going to be another
Viet Nam. It will be brought
to its proper conclusion,
hopefully sooner than later."

If the groundhog comes out
& isn't scared back into his
hole by the sight of his shadow,
Spring will be due very soon.

"We have guided munitions. We
have cruise missiles. We have
weapons that can get to the exact
target with pinpoint accuracy. We
also have carpet bombing, we also
have a lot of bombs that are being
uh - dropped. The difficulty is,
the enemy is dug in & you simply
cannot see them day or night. If
the bombs don't score a direct hit
they can survive. We've been doing
this for days now & I would imagine
that if a ground war comes we will be
able to conclude it quite successfully.

"We are remarkably on schedule.
Viet Nam was thirteen years. This
is going to be weeks & months.
People, quite frankly, were very
patient during Viet Nam. Not only
are they very patient with this one
but they have strong support for
what the President is doing.

"Just as soon as we put out some information
that may be an honest mistake all of a sudden
it will be thought of as disinformation & then
parallels to Viet Nam will be made & that's one
of the lessons of Viet Nam. Our military is being
very careful with the information they're giving out.

"I can't imagine the president would use
chemical or nuclear weapons under any
circumstances. I can't imagine it.
But you never rule any options out -"

Oops. Did he say what I think he said?

2/2/91 #1 Marines at Khafji

Chanting Allah Akbar
victorious Saudis parade
their nation's flag through
the streets of Khafji.

During the battle some Marines,
trapped in a building during a
reconnaissance mission, had
this to say:

Q: Was there a time you thought
you were going to lose your life?

"Oh yeah," says Lance Cpl. Cooper.
"The whole time it was going on."

Lance Cpl. McNamee says,
"I was scared the whole time
it was going on - I mean,
you can't be in a situation
like that & not be scared
but the main thing we were
worried about was doing the job
& getting out in one piece so
we could come back & do it again."

Cpl. Ingram says, "I'd be lying if I
didn't say the thought of dying didn't
come across my mind but I didn't think
about that the whole time. I was just
thinking about what we should be doing."

Cpl. Brown, who took some
shrapnel in the leg, says
the outcome he wants is to

"see Iraq crushed. To tell
the truth, we're going to
stay here till it's done."

Q: Are you willing to give your life?

Brown thinks it over, replies
"I'm not going to go out and
deliberately get myself killed
but I'll be in situations
where I could lose my life.
I don't like the idea of death
- but I can accept it."

2/2/91 #2 Day Eighteen Begins

(extracts, quotes & comments)

Many military members
are highly upset at the
good footage Saddam has
finally managed to provide us.

They're particularly pissed
at CNN for running the stories
over & over & over & over at
all hours of the day & night.

Not only does it upset the viewers
it may be sending the wrong message
to millions of people in the Arab world.

Funny, we don't often think of it
as an 'Arab World' do we? More like
a collection of exotic little hot shots
fond of shooting off their mouths
& mounting suicide missions.

Unlike earlier wars, we're bombing
with extraordinary accuracy. Smart

bombs hit within five feet of target
while unguided bombs on Smart airplanes
seem to be averaging within forty feet.
This war is the best, as far as
minimizing non-military targets.

There will always be bombs going astray,
especially if they try to shoot them down.
Please view all of this damage footage (Iraq's)
with considerable skepticism because

what is seen
may not be what's
really happening.

Imagine that.
How do they
lie with such
clear panning
shots of
utter chaos?

2/2/91 #3 Lull

Radio Iraq said today
they'll fight to the end
using everything from
kitchen knives to weapons
of mass destruction.

Propaganda party on CNN,
courtesy of 24 journalists
of all nations let into
Baghdad 2 days ago ---
"The Dictator seems content
to play the violin. The
playing is convincing,
it's the human hair bow
that's so distracting."

"I think he over-estimates
the power of the people
of a mega-democracy to
influence it's immediate
course of action. In the
long run it gets it together
but by then it's another war."

In the lull between
significant operations,
or at least new phases,
I've read over my
sketches of previous days.
Things that seemed novel
are forgotten now, like
the industrial strength
security at the Super Bowl.

A few things remain engraved.
Oil spill as a weapon.
There's another one today although
it fails to raise much interest.
Been there, seen that.
The Baghdad raid televised from
the Hotel Al Rasheed. The first
Scuds to hit Tel Aviv. Dictator's
live interview with Peter Arnett.
Or the omnipresent paranoia that
the Dictator could inflict
un-named terrors upon humanity.

Many were apprehensive for awhile
but widescale world terrorism has
failed to materialize. The Muslim
world only tolerates him because
they must,, given a choice between
the Dictator & the West. It feels
like he's washed up. Expressions
of Allied military confidence have
shaded into modesty as though on cue.

They admit he may have some military
sense & that his troops are not all
that tacky. Is this to appease him?
An idea sent down from headquarters?

Quiet before the storm?
Tomorrow may tell the tale.
Is he really going to make
the Allies fight a ground war?
He should only try & stop them!

2/2/91 #4 Sunday Morning Update

41,000 sorties flown to date.
Officials confirm seven marines
were killed by friendly fire.
Also confirm some of the 1st
U.S. ground deaths in the war
were caused by our own missiles.
The term friendly fire appears.

A B-52 bomber crashed in the ocean
possibly due to mechanical failure.
Three crew members were rescued,
three are missing, presumed drowned.
A U.S. Marine Cobra helicopter crashed
on a non-combat mission killing two.

Allied commanders believe Iraqi
troops may be regrouping after
defeat at Kafji but no reports
of any movement within Kuwait.

Scud debris injured 29 people
near Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
Traffic picking in downtown
Baghdad streets despite threat
of continued bombing raids.
Schools remained closed.
Water is scarce - many residents

forced to use the Tigris river
for washing & drinking.
They seem oddly cheerful, withall.
What kind of propaganda is that?

Allied Forces continue to enjoy Air,
Naval & Moral supremacy in the area.
On the subject of Iran's intentions
vis a vis the Iraq airforce sequestered
in their country & their assurance that
they won't allow them back into the war,
the U.S. Ambassador to Britain says
"I think that the Iranians are
practiced, if not talented, liars.
I don't know if I'd trust them
as far as I could throw them."

2/3/91 #1 Code of Conduct#
(summation of daily press briefing)

Nothing to report today.
At least nothing I'm privy to.
Briefings have been blacked out
after the first half hour at the
request of the Saudi print media,
or some such, whatever that means,
leaving me to muse on generalities.

According to latest interpretations,
the Code of Conduct requiring
POW's to give only their name,
rank, serial number & date
of birth is only a guideline.
Implementation is not humanly possible
in light of what has been
learned in the last wars.
Most POW's don't resist
questioning for very long.
Given enough physical abuse &
torture almost anyone will talk.

Those who won't, don't come
home alive. Once a POW breaks
he is overcome by feelings of guilt.
Maybe that's why that Marine said
yesterday that he'd rather die than
be captured. No one can be prepared.
For death, yes, but not for questioning
under excessive duress. There's no more
training for that than for real battle.

The framers of the Geneva convention
covering personal conduct of prisoners
of war was intended only as an idealistic
ethical standard to which prisoners could
aspire & doesn't carry the force of law.

I'd add that depth of conviction of
the righteousness of the cause in
commission of which the prisoner
was captured may have something
to do with how much he's willing to
put up with before he spills the beans.

2/3/91 #2 General Schwarzkopf's Estimation
(an extract)

I don't discount anything
Saddam Hussein says.
He's demonstrated capability
for the most grievous acts
against human beings.
A mass murderer by
any definition, he's
gassed his own people.
I won't be surprised
if he uses chemical or
biological weapons, not
easy things to weaponeer.

Guilty of gross over-exaggeration

in the past, I like to console
myself that his threats are
possibly just more of the same.

Let's face it, what have
they done to date?
Airforce has done nothing.
Navy has done absolutely
nothing. The airforce has
abandoned the army on
the ground & run away
to a neutral country.
They've fired a few Scuds
most of which have been
intercepted, the rest doing
insignificant damage.
They've mounted one small
probing attack (Khafji)
with very heavy losses -
that's not exactly
a distinguished list
of accomplishments.

On the other hand, what does
Saddam say they've done?
Incinerated Tel Aviv. Shot down
two hundred American aircraft.
Glorious victory in - so on -
either he's not getting very
good reports or he's not
listening very well or he's
deliberately distorting results.

I don't pay very much attention
to Saddam's interviews, frankly,
I don't pay much attention to
TV news. I kinda like to think
I have better information.

2/3/91 #3 Finnish Editor Criticizes U.S. Media

(an extract)

The threshold of war is lowered
by presenting a picture of the
clinically clean war. American
media has accepted a very tight
censorship. It is not a military
but a political censorship furthering
the aims of the administration by
making the war look like a nice
picnic on the sand. CNN presents it
as an entertainment, a clean family
show with no bodies on the sand.
Like always, the U.S. media rallies
around the flag in a manner which
astonishes many Europeans. They
seem to have completely forgotten
any other events in the world such
as events in the Baltics. The shallow
coverage of American television only
improves our profile as journalists
because we can present the analysis
in depth which people really want.
I know there are many distinguished
journalists involved but I object to
the way it is run in the programming
itself. Decisions are being made in
the higher echelons of the network.

2/3/91 #4 Day Eighteen Begins

The situation on the ground
is said to be quiet. Occasional
cruise missile over Baghdad;
a Scud or so for the Saudis.
Maybe one into Israel, I forget.
Another U.S. 'copter just went
down. Not combat related.
Nevertheless down.

Sunday sort of coverage on TV.
Lots of people mouthing off,
armchair Field Marshalls &
commentators talking in those
tiresome commentator tones.

Peaceful pro-Iraq demonstration
in Rabat, Morocco. 300,000.
"Assassin Bush & Mitterand
his dog follows his donkey."

Didn't watch the All-Star game.
With a war on I don't need
extra post-season football.
We got all the football we need.
We got a whole load of football.

Not too much on terrorism
making it onto television.
They report it but they
don't re-run it. No need to
get us going ballistic over that.

Nice shots of planes n' things
against the grand Arabian sky
to slip in front of commercials.
A good day for shots like that.
Some decent color in the clouds.

I see no reason not to include
the speeches & the stories
as they present themselves.
If tellingly said, let it stand.
There is no metaphor for war.
Think about it, there really isn't.
Only synecdoche, partial images.

What I'm being led to believe,
not factive verity, is the substance
of what I mean to document.

Starting to keep tapes, erasing
old movies to provide stock.
Probably never watch them
unless I start to get sentimental
about these days and nights
spent deconstructing Television War.

2/3/91 #5 On Hold

Another morning of watching
current developments until
a certain saturation is reached
& I begin to write. Fill &
empty, fill & empty. Is it
time to switch to a policy of
containment, now that the
front seems vaguely 'on hold'?
Is it a logical break point?
Is it time to say no land war?

Pipe bombs found attached
to a million gallon tank
of methanol in Norfolk.
Phone call threat says
there's another one but
so far they can't find it.
First domestic terrorism?

Battleship Missouri fired
it's big guns for the first
time since WWII.

1. Pacifists
2. Anti-U.S.
3. Pro-Palestinian

Linda Chavez, reporting
from Israel, says these
are the three categories

protesters break down into.

What, no rationalists?

She thinks the war is going
so well it would be wrong to
pull out now. The question
of stationing troops to act
as a containing force might
not be an appropriate one.
Oh yeah, sez who?
No pie for you, Linda.
Go directly to the sink
& stick your finger
down your throat.

Investors are very happy.
Dow Jones up 29.5 points.
More banks lowering
prime lending rates but
Dollar opened at a record low
against the German Mark.
Oil prices continue to fall.
Joy in Mudville.

2/4/91 #1 Propaganda Release

Another of those heart wrenching
propaganda things from Baghdad
shows conditions in a hospital
rendered seriously lame due to
Allied raids on water supplies,
electricity & public utilities.
Forced to run on two hours
of generator power each day.

"The babies they need the
special care, premature,
& now this unit has been
closed & the children

which were there all died
because incubators were
off & most of the mothers
taken their children away
& they came back dead."

Economic embargoes have
caused growing shortages
of drugs such as antibiotics,
a dwindling supply of CSF
needles for spinal taps,
lack of reagents & etc.

Shot of a baby in poor shape.
Big black eyes taking it all in.
"This baby is now dying.
Respiration is now very
slow & slow pulses.
There will be some kind of
peace, we hope & pray."
Cut to a shot of a sad looking
woman, presumably Mother.

We of course remind our
viewers that reports coming
out of Iraq are cleared by
the Iraqi government censors.
2/4/91 #2 Iran Makes a Bid

The U.S. reacts cautiously toward
Iranian proposals to mediate peace.
The State Department & Pentagon don't
want to hear about it - but they'll
listen so long as there's no funny stuff.

The administration is playing it down -
should anyone contrive a diplomatic
resolution that achieves the objective
of getting Iraq the hell out of Kuwait,
well & good, "but we frankly don't

expect it," says Defense Sec Cheney.

Turns out, President Rasfanjani
didn't exactly say he wanted to
mediate, only to meet with both
sides. There's as yet no sign
Iran's religious leaders are
willing to attempt any sort of
transaction with the Great Satan
& what they say, of course, goes.

Meanwhile Allied bombings of Chemical
& biological supply depots may be
causing widespread contamination
of nerve & mustard gas & Anthrax.
Traces of neuro-toxins have been
detected in clouds coming from Iraq.
Some contamination is expected from
the meltdown of Iraq's small nuclear
reactors but only locals need worry.

I get the funny hunch that people
in high places are not over-anxious
to end hostilities. Just a feeling,
mind you - how they seem to
hackle at this & that, caustic
remarks that exhibit truculence
where an attitude of exhaustive
exploration of alternatives might
seem a more convincing stance.
Must be careful of these opinions.
Open the oven too soon the cake falls.

But such hunches help convince
me that a summarizing document,
such as this concatenation, might
help serve as an indication of what
the public was given to know -
of the manner in which it was given
to be understood - when this war

is no longer anything but folk tale.

If I didn't
believe that,
I'd stop now.
But I do,
and so cannot.

2/4/91 #3 No Omelette w/o Breaking Eggs#

Did I mention there's been
one Allied bombing sortie for
every minute of the war so far?

Iraq has reportedly started
setting up military headquarters
in schools & mosques to take
advantage of Allied restraint
in bombing such facilities.

Baghdad still insists we're
targeting civilian positions
and we continue to deny it
after yet another massive
bombardment of the city.

As ground war time approaches,
Iraq is beginning to move its
command & control facilities
into heavily populated civilian
areas in Kuwait. Allies, of course,
will not be targeting those areas
but will exercise the same care
& caution which characterizes
the bombardment of Baghdad.Hmm.

Meanwhile the largest oil slick
the world has ever known is
moving toward Bahrain &
may arrive in 5 or 6 days.

Keep an eye on that one.

2/4/91 #4 Day Twenty Begins

Living with
this whore for
20 days now.
At 1st I thought
she was a lady.
Excitement can
do strange
things to your
perspective.

Networks over to talk now.
New national pastime
is following the war.
Comments growing
sophisticated. Opinions
cover more issues.

Settling down for a war.
Not the two week farce
of extravagant victory
promised, though they
point to their disclaimers,
modest enough at the time,
& say they said otherwise.
But everyone knows otherwise.
They promised us a short one
with satisfaction at the climax.

2/4/91 #5 Art of Harping

Thoughtful people asking
thoughtful questions about
a deeply absorbing subject -
quizzing the rock that rose
from the sea where gulls
dart snatching scraps as

we stirred in wonderment.

Nothing more today
could be news. The
footage was too good.
Its evasions were
too obvious. Its truths
too tired to retell.
Why harp on the same
subjects? Anyone who
believes is out harping
himself - which is why
there's no one to listen.

People who are not
even able to believe
in God are caught out
believing in this one
though it's face is
no more apparent,
and, like the Latter,
ubiquitous.

Been out a bit lately.
People don't talk about it
right off the bat because
they're not quite sure
where others stand on it
until after exchange of a
few probing signals.
I'm not alone in this.
Once begun, almost anyone
seems to know plenty,
especially those
who profess to have
stopped following it.

I applaud their decision.
I can't explain what I
find so fascinating in it.

An attraction to the real
- or an addiction to crime?

2/4/91 #6 Situational Talk

A little situational talk here.
We're looking at all these
reasons to delay the attack
by ground. An early start
could cost casualties due
to unpreparedness, turning
off public support, plus
Allies can use more time
to cut enemy supply lines
& destroy stocks of food,
fuel, water & munitions.
Necessary ground fighting
equipment is still in transit
or not yet adapted to the desert.
Newer troops need more time
to train & groove into their units.

On the other hand, Iraqis are
evolving tactics to operate
despite Allied air supremacy.
Khafji was an example &
slowed our preparations.
Studies show troops are
likely to lose their edge after
six months in the desert &
we don't have enough trained
reserves to replace them, not
to mention it's going to start
getting hot along mid-March.
Arabs are anxious to quit by
then for Ramadan. Good idea
all around if it can be done.
Come heat of Summer them
boys be popping like flies on a
skillet. Hell favors the locals.

2/4/91 #7 Blackout?

Watched the coverage.
Even read the paper.
Either nothing is
happening or
everything is.
Is this a news blackout?
Not if you search hard enough.
Something filters
through the sediment.

Lots of name calling,
merited in my opinion.
We're all a bunch of
stinkers, including me,
waiting for something
more drastic than the
last outrage to happen.

Lots of death & injury
in Baghdad last week.
Hundreds, not thousands.
Hundreds, not scores.
"We try to get all our
bombs on target," says
a Brit pilot. "If they hit
civilians, that's tough."

No pie for him
although I admit
a little frankness
is almost refreshing
at this point in the
sanctimonious chatter.

A strange music.

Easy to see from the map,

why Iraq wants to treble
it's inconsiderable access
to the Gulf by taking Kuwait.
Saudi Arabia & Iran seem
to have it all between them.
Such attempts at readjustment
would seem eventually inevitable.
110 Iraq planes gone to Iran now.

Iraq radio broadcasting cryptic
messages which appear to be
instructions to international
terrorists to get the lead out.

Israel has lifted the curfew
on Palestinians in selected
cities, such as Bethlehem,
with a stern warning to
keep their noses clean.
Tomorrow they may start
busing some to their jobs
in Israel. It's getting
expensive to feed them.

2/5/91 #1 Day Twenty-One Begins
(with weary cheek in tongue)

Iraqi military nears defeat as
Allies re-arm for ground war.

As soon as we figure out
what we mean by winning
we're gonna go in & do it.

Allies hit the Dictator's
home town today. Did they
knock over the old malt shoppe
& the drive-in movie where
the SOB learned to neck -
blow up the old schoolhouse

& the little white chapel
beneath the spreading palm?

This one's for the propaganda barrage!
This one's for the fifteen sons
of bitches who raped that Kuwaiti
nurse we all heard about!
This one's for shooting two
boys in front of their mother!
For the black & blue POWs!
We know it ain't part of the war
but this one is for gassing the Kurds!
Last but not least for bombing Tel Aviv!

The rest of our battle plans have
to do with military objectives;
this little side mission is
just our way of saying
Up Yours! Have a rotten day.

His window is very small.
He must surrender soon if
he is going to do it at all.
He can have it if he wants it.
Twenty thousand times his
weight in corpses. His bid.

The historians are going to call
this the six week war —or maybe
the eight week war —possibly
the quite reasonable time war.
Anyway it won't be no
thirteen year fiasco like
the other war. No way.
It'll be a surrender party.

2/5/91 #2 Beginning Week Four

Ending of the third week has
been without defined features.

Am I noticing a coronal effect
from occupying an oblique
proximity to the sun of war?

The shock is wearing off now.
I recognized shock in myself
only through familiarity with
the phenomenon. There are
few extrinsic clues available
to the subjectivity. Shock is
not an emotion. It is more of
an adjacent dimension you
inhabit when the conditions
of your normal existence are
changed negatively & abruptly.
You want to know everything
about what caused it - or as
little as is safe to define it.
All responses are abnormal.
People say & do strangeness.
Are given to flights of fantasy.
Attribute supernatural power
to the agency which caused it.

But soon enough the grifter
is back to grifting,
the tinker to tinking
& all of the spotted sheep
blend back into the fold.
The war becomes the business
of those who are paid
or made to fight it, who,
when they get home, wish
only to learn to forget it.

Another generation of those!
More to know what the decent
folks at home don't know or
want to believe; to walk the
streets with a damaged look,

thoughts far in the clouds
of a foreign land & time.

The beat goes on.

2/5/91 #3 The Great Satan

Last night, on my television screen,
I saw the horror show side of America
in the guise of an elected official,
the smirking self righteousness of the
seasoned back room dealer, plain talker,
vote gleaner, so certain his perception
is entirely correct he sees no reason
not to use atomic weapons to resolve
the situation.

His assurance & demeanor gave the lie
to the proposition that the Dictator
is the major monster of this war - he
is only one among many. The congressman
slathered the airwaves with self serving
pragmatism bordering on lunacy.

The sense of keen pleasure with which
he made his obscene pronouncement at
first incited incredulity, then appalled.

Is this us?
Is this our side?
Are we that?

How many like him
authorized this war
& as many folk to
fight it as strategy
requires? A million
more if need be so?

So certain is he of his rectitude,

the congressman from Indiana
would destroy the righteous with
the reprobate, whomsoever should
display themselves beneath the
jurisdiction of his nuclear light,
yea, and snigger at their plight.

Is this is the Great Satan that the
Ayatollahs fear? I fear with them.
2/6/91 #1 Flood of Doubt

Today the doubts start flooding in.
From humble-seeming admissions
that the Iraqi troops were not so
tacky, revision upward begins,
either at insistence of reporters
or to start preparing us for phase
two of the war. Turns out we haven't
knocked off that many Republican
Guards & they're a lot better
provisioned than previously thought.
Ham hocks, Halvah & Hershey bars
enough for 6 months, by estimates,
hid in places bombers can't detect.

"The task is formidable," says
the Secretary of State, "and no
one should underestimate
Saddam Hussein's capabilities."

With a couple dozen coalition partners,
half a million troops in the field &
congressional permission for another
million, it seems no one is doing so.
How has this managed to escape us?
Another layer of disinformation falls
away, no longer useful to the powers
who shape this situation for the curious.

Starting to look like air raids aren't

all that effective in hitting them
where they really hurt. Looks like
the Dictator may have conceded us
Air Supremacy, knew he was deficient
in that department before he started,
didn't bother to respond by air or sea,
got his jets out of the way, sent his
ships next door for safekeeping and
just keeps digging his fortifications
while we squander bombs and rage
like eagles in the atmosphere. To
pass the time waiting for the ground
war to commence, he shunts a couple
dozen pieces of antique missileware at
Israel, more an insult than an act of war.

I think this is an accurate summary of
the strange new face of today's reality.
Another, doubtless, lies right behind it.

How many layers
of lies ulimately
constitute the truth?

2/6/91 #2 Day Twenty-Two Begins

Iraq broke diplomatic relations
with The United States & six
other leaders of the Allies today.
Two planes were shot down
heading to Iran for sanctuary.
Hussein of Jordan denounced
the war against brotherly Iraq.
Thank you. Now let's get down
to what's really bugging me.

Tightening of coverage was very
noticeable today. U.S. briefings
now triurnal with the second
& third closed to live reportage.

The reporters & correspondents
are said to favor this arrangement,
feeling they can get more candid
assessments if the cameras are off
and the Pentagon need no longer
concoct a full convincing hand
to show a viewing public every day.

Today's available briefing dealt
with the planes shot down and
rumors of Iraq's supply capability.
The usual post-show critique,
often lengthy & informative,
collapsed to a few brief statements
of events. There was really nothing
more to condense or elucidate.

Their gain is my loss.
I feel forcibly removed
one step further from
the fountainhead of
critical information I've
come to feel it's my right
to receive. Limited &
circumspect as it was,
there is now less of it.

Or maybe the two events were
merely coincidental. A day of
slim news plus slim coverage.
Propaganda > Disinformation
Less information > No information.

In this country you cannot shut
down the presses but you can
provide them with disappearing ink.

2/6/91 #3 Scraps of Today's Briefing
(extract of General Neal's talk)

I don't feel there's a discrepancy
between what's being reported
& what we've been telling you.
We're as careful as we can be.
We never said there'd be
no collateral damage.
War is a dirty business.

No, we're not too concerned
about Iraq moving military
operations into "no strike"
zones in Baghdad. Plenty of
other things for us to attack.
It's a target rich environment.

24 hour air strikes
for 22 days now.
50,000 plus sorties,
each carefully planned.

The Republican Guards are a
terrific organization, well
organized & well equipped.
They've been bloodied before
& have the experience of
combat under their belt.
Having said that, I think
we can well handle them.

Regarding friendly fire
casualties, we instituted
some new procedures &
we just kinda restated the
obvious to our leadership -
they have to be extra careful.

It's a very dynamic process,
war fighting is, & it's not
something you get out of a
video game or a comic book.

2/7/91 #1 On the Poetic Front

A radio war is going on
between Iraq & the Saudis
lasting several hours a night
on their respective stations.

Verses are written
& read extolling the
leaders & cursing
their enemies. Saudi
verses say that Saddam
is a bad neighbor, one
who will not share water.

This is a considerable
bad thing for one Arab
to say of another.
The Iraqis counter
with verse suggesting
that King Fahd has
lost the power to
differentiate between
his wives & his daughters.

2/7/91 #2 Day Twenty-Three Begins#

Skip the planes shot down,
POW count & other malleable
statistics of war & get to
something I'm equipped to
talk about with reasonable
expertise: how it affects me.

In Time of War, as in less
catastrophic periods of change,
grab the lessons on the fly,
as though it were going to stop
tomorrow & the chance to observe

native nature reflected in
your personal pocket mirror,
unclouded by accustomed breath,
withdrawn. Then, it may be,
you've done the best that can
be done by a three legged dog
that speaks in scripture with
the voice of a drill sergeant
resounding from caves of
burning sulfur with teletype
rhythms of a strange music
and reedy horns of glass.

Art is a peacetime enterprise.

Re-assessing goals in dawning light
of apparent extended length of the
conflict, refiguring them in order
to continue - deciding whether I'm
writing out of sheer obsession what
was first conceived in liberty -
whether it makes any difference so
long as something basic is learned,
recorded, and sent out as a warning.

Another maniac in a maniac's war.
Hang in there for the ground action.
I know it'll be swell. Shock galore.
Trenchant horror on which cameras
can & must dutifully dwell. Finally,
War on Our Shores, via cable. Will
they black it out when they decide
we can take no more? After all, they
can't recycle the civilian population
Stateside like a burned out Bombardier.

The human psyche is more open
to manipulation than pride allows
the targets of propaganda to believe.

The talking head on my TV
knows more than I; knows
what it can & cannot say,
the politics of the network.

How much freedom is it
reasonable to sacrifice
considering the possibility
that the war is just?
How much is borrowed for
the moment, subject to
return when fighting ends?
That may well depend on
how much we noticed was
taken so we'll know what
to get sticky about later.

2/7/91 #3 Front Line Prisoner Camp

It's near the front. When you're
captured or surrender, you come
here for processing. First you're
searched then segregated, by rank
or disposition, in one of four
10 x 20 ft holes dug in the desert
floor surrounded by razor wire.
Each hole holds 100 prisoners.

You only spend 24 hours here but
the memory should last a lifetime.
What do you expect being an enemy?
You will be handcuffed & forced
to remain seated unless you need
to go to the toilet which you will
certainly need to do eating 3 meals
a day after only 1 a day for months.

You will remain silent.
You will remain sitting.
Search, segregate, silence,

speed & safeguard. The 5 S's.
Get you to the rear away from
the action as soon as possible
to make room for more EPW's.

No facilities for warmth,
shelter or protection from
chemical attack. No blankets
or gas masks but we'll try to
find something for you to hold
over your head if it gets wet
& treat you the best we can
consistent with not caring if
you live or die. You will soon
gather that this is not the
little house on the prairie,
which, the National Enquirer
reports, is among your leader's
very favorite television programs.

2/7/91 #4 Pep Talk
(an extract)

"Make no doubt about it
Saddam Hussein & his
henchman will be held
personally accountable
for their vicious acts"
says VP Dan Quayle,
addressing makers of the
Tomahawk Cruise missile.

"The USA is a peace loving
nation," he says. "We didn't
want this war. We didn't
go looking for a fight. I can
tell you President George
Bush pursued every possible
option of peace that there was.
At every time the President

offered an option of peace
to Saddam Hussein it was
rejected. He didn't choose
peace. He chose war. And
now that war is begun I'm
sure that perhaps Saddam
Hussein hopes that the
ideas of the demonstrators
& the protestors will prevail.
He should not misinterpret
what he sees because the
protestors are a tiny
but vocal minority but the
American people overwhelmingly
support the President of
the United States & our
policy in the Persian Gulf.

"Thank you for what you have done.
Thank you for the contribution
that you are making to peace.
Thank you for giving the support
to our troops in the Persian Gulf
& thank you for giving them
the qualitative advantage that
is necessary to be victorious
in this conflict. Thank you,
goodbye, God bless you & God
bless the United States of
America. Thank you very much."

2/8/91 #1 Scraps, Extracts & Summaries

We are exceptionally
ready to do anything
the President tells us,
says General Neal.
A hundred forty-seven
Iraqi planes are now
sequestered in Iran.

We are certain they
are out of the war.

Execution squads behind
Iraqi front lines will kill
any of their number
who try to surrender.

Jordanian officials moved
quickly to deny reports
that King Hussein is
considering cutting Jordan's
ties with the United States.

The report comes a day
after the White House
announced it is reviewing
fifty-five million dollars
worth of aid to Jordan.

They don't like how we
bomb their convoys
which might be enemy
supply operations but
mostly turn out not to be.

The King would like to
stay neutral but his folks
are a little more basic.
3,000 in the street
shouted pro-Iraqi stuff
& denounced Bush at
a rally in a Palestinian
refugee camp in Jordan.

Blue chips are heading higher
after a slow start on Wall St.
Dow Jones is up 10.65 pts. War
has not been bad for business.

2/8/91 #2 Day Twenty-Four Begins

"The Palestinian question is the
heartbeat of Arab nationalism"
according to Ambassador Seelye.
The converse & the apposite
might also be true in a sense
but the obverse is in doubt.

Arab Nationalism is the Heartbeat
of the Palestinian Question. The
Arab Question is the Heartbeat
of Palestinian Nationalism. But
is Palestinian Nationalism the
Heartbeat of the Arab Question?

Since we're in the area it seems
they must take the opportunity to
do a little special pleading. Having
found there's never an appropriate
place to invoke their cause, the war
seems as inappropriate a place as any,
vis a vis the IRA bombing a war council
meeting at Downing Street yesterday.

House to house combat in Kuwait?
The complexity of such an operation.
Only a neutron bomb could surgically
remove them with pinpoint accuracy.
Would also work well on protestors.
On anyone who gathers. Nothing
stimulates inventiveness like war
except threat of war. We're glad
we were able to see this one coming
half a dozen years. Credit to our foresight.

The so called lull in the war, the vacuum
of uncertainty surrounding the growing
understanding that air power cannot be
decisively effective here, is probably

hardening into a commitment toward
the necessity for hand to hand combat.
Unless we change our objective. This is
also in the wind just now. We say we won't
but that is what we have to say. Rhetorical
loop holes were invented for just such times.

2/8/91 #3 Another British Briefing
(an extract)

The Met Man lied again
this morning. We were
expecting good weather.
Awaiting destruction in
central Iraq was a
large nineteen tank
petrol storage facility.
We safely delivered 32
one-thousand pound bombs
direct on the target.

An Iraqi SAM missile
support area received
the attention of another
Tornado formation. By
the end of that visit two
large storage tanks were
ablaze accompanied by
numerous secondary explosions.

Three Tornados equipped
with the anti-radiation missile
were fired in advance of a raid.
They sat overhead floating on
a parachute waiting for an
unsuspecting Iraqi operator
to turn on his radar. Should
he have done so they would
have gone straight in
but in that event the

Iraqis left their radar off.

You will notice an increase
in the number of ships that
we have deployed in the Gulf.
I can confirm that there are
now eight destroyers on station.
They are as follows:
Her Majesty's Ships Gloucester,
Cardiff, London, Brilliant, Brave,
Brazen, Manchester & Exeter.

The army has stockpiled
enough petrol to take
the average family car
one hundred million miles
or four thousand times
around the world.

2/9/91 #1 Anomaly

Abdulrazzak Al-Hashimi,
Iraqi Ambassador to France,
says: "On the 4th of August
Iraqi forces started to withdraw
from Kuwait & informed the
Security Council about that but
the American Administration
undermined that withdrawal
& the American forces & the
Allied forces started to come to
Saudi Arabia & it's very clear,
the intention to destroy Iraq
was clear from that time."

Somehow in the barrage of
news & events that fact
seems to have escaped me

but, if that's the case,

no hard feelings - let's
shake hands & admit
it's all a big mistake.
Sure is lucky you told
us before we both got
into this over our heads.

2/9/91 #2 Day Twenty-Five Begins
(paraphrased extracts of a talk show)

How much more air pounding before
we move into the groundwar phase?
The more we bomb the less we die but
if you call in a bear hunter's convention,
eventually it's time to go shoot bear.
The planes are mostly good at hunting duck,
especially sitting ones, but bear hunters
are what we got. It's most of what we
brought, including our command structure.

Liberal position switches
from let negotiations work
to let bombing do the work.
Thousands of Americans
dead or wheelchaired
no good for elections -
better to be patient.
Ramadan & hot weather.
It's all got to be factored in.
Minimalizing our casualties
is both a political & a military
concern but winning the war
is the first & foremost priority.

Relentlessly we follow a plan
designed in advance to terminate
in a ground offensive. What we're
doing. Never intended otherwise.
We're warring to remove a menace
to the whole region. Kuwait is an

incidental beneficiary of the war.

Saddam won't go for cease fire
so long as hope lives. Soviets
& Iran meanwhile maneuver
for influence after the defeat,
which all assume to be
unquestionably preordained.

Jordan's monarch is called
the Plucky Little King. Really
gonna get plucked this time.

Saddam has had success
on the propaganda front.
Arab paper says Madonna is
entertaining the U.S. troops,
anathema to Arab morality.
Last week he made propaganda
capital out of the battle of Khafji.
Moves more calculated to appeal
to Arab sensibilities than to enlist
foreign sympathies it would seem.

Protestors would be out on the street
for lesser causes than this. These
people are primed & ready America
Haters. There's a certain group of
people who just go. Relax immigration
barriers they'd be the first over here.

The strongest Arab power is being
weakened, weakening all Arab power.
Less raw force for the League to secure
the common territory against invasion.

Astonishingly uncritical media coverage
but the viewers can see through it,
understand why they get what they get.
Why spend so much time debating such

trivial matters as press restrictions
when there's a big fat war raging?

Right now the question uppermost is:
wheelchairs or air containment?

2/9/91 #3 Good Morning Report

Good Morning. Iraq
rejects any notion
of a cease fire.
Deputy Prime
Minister Hamadi,
now in Aman,
Jordan, urges all
Muslims to join
in a single
Islamic front.
The issue,
he says,
is one of
American & Zionist
aggression which
aims to dominate
Iraq & the region.

Allies chalk up 57,000
sorties since start of
Operation Desert Storm.
Defense Sec. Cheney says
Saddam still retains
a big piece of what
was once the world's
4th largest military
but isn't anymore.

Scuds destroyed an Embassy
in central Israel Friday but
they aren't saying which one.
Raw sewage in the streets of

Baghdad prompting concern
about possibility of epidemic.
Cholera. Plague. The Mayor says
"I cannot say how is it my feeling."

Pieces of a shot down U.S. jet
are being auctioned in Jordan
to buy food for Iraqi children.

Bombs found attached to fuel tanks
in Norfolk Virginia now revealed
to be attempt to collect insurance.
No relation to terrorism. Now sports.

2/10/91 #1 Point Counterpoint

Responding to Gorbachev's:
"at this critical moment I
am making a public insistent
appeal to the President of Iraq
that he weigh once again all
that is involved for his country
& to show proof of realism
which would allow him to work
toward a sure & fair settlement"
Al-Hashimi replies: "You see,
when you give a country the
choice between surrendering
unconditionally or fight then
that country has no choice
- to fight is really being
realistic because no country
in the world accept the
surrender unconditionally."

2/10/91 #2 General Neal's Briefing

Marine shavetail haircut
& desert fatigues, three
sharp lines inderdict his

forehead this morning.

2800 sorties in last 24 hrs
bringing total to 59,000.
One U.S. Harrier jet lost.
42 new prisoners turned
themselves in yesterday.

"We keep hearing how
poorly fed & equipped
the Iraqis are," says
Rick Sallinger, posing a
challenge, reading from
a letter by the parent
of a U.S. soldier near the
Kuwaiti border: "'We have
no military protection,
lack equipment & armor,
not being properly fed,
two meals a day or less,
no Desert Storm fatigues,
no sand colored fatigues.'
Is this an isolated incident
or are you having a bit
of a problem with it?"

We don't have any significant
logistics problems. The fatigues
are about the only issue I can
comment on. Some of the forces
coming out of Europe did not
have, within their deployment
package, desert fatigues.

No comment.
No comment.
No comment.
No comment.

There's no such thing

as a cap on it; we'll
respond to the battlefield.
It could go higher,
it could go lower.
It'll be driven by the
dynamics of the battlefield.

As for reports of sewage
in the streets, there's one
person that can affect the
health & well being of the
people of Baghdad & that's
the President of Baghdad.
I think I'll leave it at that.

All our forces have arrived now,
with the exception of one ship.
Their duty has been extended
for one year, including previous
time that they have been here.

I've been briefed over at
Central Command Airforce.
It's mind boggling how well
orchestrated it is. It makes
LAX, Dallas & Atlanta combined
look like kids on the block;
linking up the AWACs, the tankers,
all the rest of those aircraft
at different times & altitudes.
I'm very comfortable with it.

A Kuwaiti looking fellow
in white robe inquires: can
you comment, there is some
reports illustrating Iraqi troops
is assassinating more Kuwaiti
citizen & stealing their food?

The only thing I can comment is

the past track record of atrocities.

Boy, we're out of questions!!? Great!

2/10/91 #3 Day Twenty-Six Begins

Personal note:
No one hired me, asked me
to write this, or suggested
I should. I'm a volunteer,
conscious of the fact & so
restrain myself from too
much kibbitzing regarding
things I know little about.
That said, I don't think the
following thoughts fall into
the category of things which
an amateur has no right
to form an opinion about.

There is little that would strike
a thoughtful individual as being
honorable or efficient about the
continuous bombardment of the enemy
& its population centers, or about
the so called technological war,
but I can sit still, barely, for
the argument that the cause may be
a marginally just one, particularly
in view of the alleged atrocities
attributed to the enemy in the
invasion & occupation of Kuwait,
regardless of the correctness of
claims to the territory. Still,
it seems pretty much a coin toss.

A war without defined honor
at the borders of expediency.

The cat has been let out of the bag

& it's possible such wars will be
a regular feature of coming decades.
Vast problems have been highlighted,
paradoxes which will not be solved
at its conclusion. Let us be content
with the escape of the cat & fear
above all else to release the nuclear
tiger in the name of expediency.

Ultimate restraint in choice
of weapons may allow a
point of honor to emerge
which will prove to be of
more concern to the world
than the outcome of a proxy
war between sovereign states.

2/10/91 #4 Khalid Al-Turki Speaks
(an extract)

This is not a war of competing
visions or of ideology, per se. It's
about stopping a local despot who
is trying to dominate the Arab World;
a local thief invading his neighbor,
destroying its people & pillaging
& raping its resources. We keep
this in mind as we shift to the future.
This war has been a very painful
experience for all of us. Nobody
wanted this war. Neither the people
of Iraq –and I must distinguish here
between them & Saddam Hussein
& his clique– the people are our
fellow Arabs & our fellow Muslims
& we have had hundreds of years
of close relations with them.
We know them, we respect them,
there is no animosity between the
Saudi people & the Iraqi people.

As this war comes to an end you
will see that we, the Iraqis & the
Egyptians, will in due course again
become close & co-operate for the
benefit of the entire Arab World.

2/11/91 #1 General Kelly Expounds#

(an extract)

Intelligence is a mosaic. There's
a whole lot of pieces that go into it.
Some of 'em are great big glaring
things, others are little tiny things.
That's what the Commander in the
theater & the Chairman & Secretary
& the President here have to wrestle
with & it does get down to being
an art. It's not a science. If it were
then wars probably wouldn't be fought
because scientifically you could calculate
before the fact who's gonna win. A lot
of it will depend on what the sinews
of war are. I think Rommel once wrote
that before the first shot's ever fired
the logisticians have already decided
who's gonna win. I'm happy to tell you
we're in very good shape logistically
& they're not in very good shape
logistically but when you get to the
point where a commander's gonna
make a decision it's something that
only that commander can decide.

Now we have a lot of information,
obviously, that we don't share
that helps to make that decision
& sharing it really would not be

a wise or helpful thing to do because
it could very conceivably raise U.S.
casualties which, of course, nobody
wants to have happen. No commander
who has ever fought a battle was
completely sure on the eve of that
battle. That's the loneliest time on
Earth: when you're a commander
& you're about to go. We will be
in a position to make a very valid
estimates & make very, in my view,
solid recommendations to the
National Command Authority, the
President & Secretary, if it's
decided that the time has come.
Right now we have plenty of targets,
plenty of airplanes, we have sufficient
munitions to drop from those airplanes,
so it seems to me that the wise thing
to do would be to keep on doing what
we're doing & continue to trip the enemy.

As a tanker I can tell you if I was sittin'
in one of those tanks up on that border,
I'd be sayin' to myself "well, I think
a hundred percent's reasonable." We're
not gonna get that, obviously, but let's
make it as easy on that foot soldier
as we possibly can before we go

.
2/11/91 #2 My Briefing

OK, here's what I think is going on
as of the 2cnd week of February,
4th week of the Gulf War, pundits,
briefers & statisticians aside.

The Dictator is conducting a war of
nerves, continuing to hint that he has

something really big up his sleeve
that'll make his enemies wish they'd
never got into this in the first place.

In spite of the sixty or so planes
we've destroyed & the hundred
& sixty some removed to Iran, he's
still got most of his airforce hidden,
can't use them because we've got
radar & he might as well not have;
should he so much as flick a radar
switch, we send a radiation detecting
missile right at it. Should he deploy
them, it'll probably have to be en mass
in one glorious suicidal assault on
the ground troops.For purposes of
Kamikaze air assault, there's no point
squandering his precision aircraft.
The Jihad can use them. Any old tubs
will do to dump bombs and poison gas.

Gas his troops, gas our troops,
gas Israel, Saudi Arabia & etc.
We know he's got something tucked
away more sophisticated than Scuds.

Laying in there not tipping his hand.
Gas in Kuwait & detonation of
all the mines attached to their
oil wells. Several million more
barrels of oil into the Gulf should
put the candle on the cake &, as
promised, we'll have the Mother of
All Battles. When & if we discover
his bunker, after the conflagration,
he'll be slumped in a chair like old
Adolf with a bullet through his noggin.
That's what I'd call a big time spoiler.

For a hundred years after that,

no Arabs will name their kids
Saddam. Or else they all will.

Should none of this come to pass,
this will look like an obsessive
bit of paranoia in days to come.
But it's noteworthy to remember
that there was a time when it
seemed justifiable to entertain
such extraordinary thoughts as these
& even, more or less, believe them.

2/11/91 #3 Day Twenty-Seven Begins

War forces so much input it's like
a gas attack on the sensorium. As
the weeks go by, few can afford
the time to continue engaging it.

Some say they've stopped paying
attention to it, not because of
time involved, but because it's
a lot of propaganda anyway. Sure,
but what is propaganda? How does
it work, here & now, affecting me?

What about it is not propaganda?
How do you tell the difference?
You can tell the difference, I'm
almost sure of it. But you've got
to pay a lot of attention. Can't be
too quick to accept generalizations.

Propaganda aims at generalizations
based on selection & interpretation
of circumstances. Selection process,
not specific circumstance, constitutes
propaganda. However,unintentional
details slip out inadvertently.

They are not as comprehensively clever
as they think they are. Sudden clarity
is sometimes achieved & another truth
about the war replaces a generality
that was making do to fill the vacuum.

What I wonder, along with a growing
number of others, is what I'll do when
it's all over. Follow the mop up?
I sincerely hope not. Get back to my
old projects? What old projects? They
are swept away in the ineluctable
intensity of the war experience.
What pre-war concern could have
the same salience after the excess
of this Florid Arabesque Sanguinity?
Do cultures only become fully alive
when their underpinnings are menaced?

2/11/91 #4 Quick, What Was That?

The CNN commentator in a raincoat
posed before the White House reveals:
"President Bush says the war has
gone far better than he'd hoped in
terms of loss of life. But it isn't
over yet & analysts say it's far
too early to predict the war's
future course or its casualties."
I've run the tape back & forth
a number of times & I'm sure
he said that. Does Congress know?
About the President's startling hope?

The war against grammar continues.

2/11/91 #5 Day Twenty-Eight Begins
(extract & fantasia of panel discussion)

What is the Dictator up to?
Why is he doing it? What
is he thinking about that
isn't too clear to anyone?

Outlast the coalition.
Casualties ordained.
Attrition. They made
it possible to happen.
Egypt. Syria. The rest
of them. Not Jordan.
Not Yemen. Not Iran.
Not Saddam. Not U.S.

Them.

They are brothers.
They must pay for
what they've done.
U.S. is only doing

what enemies should do:
try their best to kill him.

Allies have
air superiority
air supremacy
interdiction
now its time
to go get 'em.
Draw them out.
Charge.
Protect the flank
with airpower
or
hit 'em from the
ocean & drive
them into the guns
or

do something unexpected
both quickly & violently.

He wants a Gettysburg. Allies
want coordinated maneuvers.

To know his tactic is to
frame him. Deceptive
moves: Khafji - diversion.
Planes to Iran - diversion.
Scuds - diversion.
What is not a diversion?
What moves are actual war?

A Master of Diversion
waiting for the Soviets
to step in like Arabs
from another planet!

2/12/91 #2 Relaxed Briefing

65,000 sorties. No friendly losses.
Might of lost a helicopter, not sure.
No planes escaped to Iran today.
675 sorties continued to inderdict
his lines of communication, roads,
rail & bridge systems, in order to
isolate Kuwaiti theater of operations.

General Neal's hair is much neater
today than on his previous briefing.
The deep triple lines between his
eyebrows are missing this evening.
Either had good sleep or good news.
Probably the President's decision to
hold off the ground attack, plus the
departure of the visiting Defense Sec.
& Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
has made life a little easier around

Central Command, if I don't miss my guess.

In S.Kuwait a convoy of 20 to 50
vehicles attacked by coalition air forces.
Numerous secondary explosions.
3 Scuds last night, 2 to Israel,
another to Saudi Arabia. Minor
property damage & 2 minor injuries
in Riyadh, 7 minor injuries &
property damage in Israel, probably
shrapnel or warheads falling from
Scuds hit by defending Patriot missiles.

Other assorted attacks & damage.
F-16's attacked a possible Scud
site. As they were rolling into the
target, there was a huge ground
explosion. What we think was
one of the Iraqi technicians was
checking the fuel level with a match.

To date 62 Scuds have been fired.
Border skirmishes, nothing much
to speak of. Iraqi patrol engaged
& chased back to the North.
Again this morning coalition forces
conducted a combined arms attack,
artillery, Naval gun fire & air
strikes against Iraqi positions.
No results to report at this time.

6 Iraqis surrendered to U.S. forces.
Total of 87 presently under U.S. control.
Iraq continues to disregard the Geneva
Convention, as well as Red Cross
attempts to learn the status of detainees.

We get confirmation of low Iraqi morale.
Squads executing those found listening
to prohibited radio channels, trying to

escape, or leaving their assigned areas.
Captured equipment indicates rust &
lack of proper lubrication, with notable
exceptions. General lack of supervised
maintenance of this equipment. I think
no one in his right mind is going to lift
the top of his engine compartment to
check the oil with f15s & B52s overhead.

Naval forces continue to support the air
campaign & conduct mine countermeasures,
training manuvers & maritime interception
operations. I'm ready for any questions.

2/12/91 #1 This Is Not A Drill

Baghdad air raid shelter hit.
Between 200 & 700 deaths;
they're still dragging them out.
The Soviet envoy's meeting with
Saddam gives 'cause for hope.'
Iraqi foreign minister Aziz will
fly to Moscow Sunday to speak
with President Gorbachev.
First hint of conciliation since
Operation Desert Storm began.

Forgot to record these recent items.
Defense Secretary Cheney writes
"to Saddam with affection" on a
bomb being loaded into a plane.
Mongols attacked Baghdad in 1248
causing 700,000 casualties.
Two Iraqi soldiers surrendered
to a Life magazine photographer.

Vis a vis Soviet attempts at
negotiation, the White House
Press Sec. says: "the deciding

factor for us is what does he
say about getting out of Kuwait?"

A British official said the
bombing of the air raid shelter
was: "extremely regrettable
but it was bound to happen
sooner or later." Another added
"no British pilots took part in
Wednesday's raids on Baghdad."
Just in case you wondered.

Iraqi Health Minister called
the bombing "pre-planned."

Largest of the three oil spills is
still creeping toward Saudi Arabia's
main water de-salination plant.

This is not a drill.

2/13/91 #1 Bloody Wednesday

Some kind of response to the
bombing is being orchestrated
in Washington for the afternoon
U.S. Briefing in Riyadh.

Commentators chat back & forth
killing time. Don't really have
to listen to understand the
gist of what they're saying.

Had all day to think
about it. About to
view this morning's
U.S. briefing on video
knowing what I know
now, what General

Neal does not know:
Iraq's official response,
live on Larry King!
Their Ambassador says
the U.S. killed a horde
of civilians on purpose.
Not one soldier died
inside the premises.

Fifteen minutes of tape
later & still no briefing.
Commercials, more gab.
Going to stock footage.
What will Neal look like
when he faces the crowd?

Yesterday's relaxed
composure will be gone.
The lull in the war is over

.
2/13/91 #2 Bloody Wednesday Briefing

Neal is already talking
as coverage begins. No
way to know what has
been said already.
Facts, figures, facts,
figures. Dry as hell &
likely to remain so.
4 transports destroyed.
No aircraft to Iran today.
Continue to interdict
his lines of communication.
No Scuds last night.
Nomenclature, event,
nomenclature, event.
62 Scuds today (or is
that to date?) Coalition
forces continue sporadic

fire across the border.

Some report of oil fires,
approximately 50.
Al Wafra has 5 wells burning.
Integral part of Iraqi strategy
is to cloud the battlefield.
EPW count. 2 of 3. 1 of 5.
We continue to continue
to continue - Neal's mind is
obviously on something else.

And then - he tries to keep
pace but there's a not so
subtle change of tone.

Neal moves from dead center
of the podium, as I remember
Schwarzkopf doing when his
manner became less official.
An unstudied action. I'll try
to transcribe this accurately.

that concludes my prepared remarks
uh, this evening - but I think
I would be remiss if I didn't
comment on, uh, the bunker strike,
uh, that, uh, has had so much,
uh, play over this past,
uh - uh - past morning.

This much he says semi-extempore,
though his eyes glance at the page
three times. Then, a glance for
each statement, he speaks with an
unhalting tone of authority as he
reveals the official view.

I'm here to
tell you that

it was a
military bunker.

It was a command & control facility.
It's one of many that have been used
by the Iraqi government throughout this
operation. We have systematically
been attacking these bunkers since
the beginning of the campaign. Within
the last 2 weeks this particular bunker
became even more active as a command
& control facility. It's a hardened shelter.

The roof was just recently painted
with a camouflage pattern to further
try to keep it out of the aviation
vision. We have no explanation
at this time, really, why there
were civilians in this bunker.

And now I'm ready to answer
any questions you may have.

Q> the expected

A> A Military Command & Control
bunker full of civilians at 4 a.m.
in the morning defies logic.

We already know what the
questions are, the world is
asking them. The various
suggested answers are
already common currency
but the grief on the streets
of Baghdad is real as the
TV cameras record & the
bodies are carted out to
the sidewalk wrapped in
multi-colored blankets.

A television extravaganza
suddenly transformed into
a nasty bloodsoaked war.

2/13/91 #3 Day Twenty-Nine Begins

The whole aspect of the war
has changed today. Gone all
talk of preparing for ground
attack. That was yesterday's
news. "How can they talk about
oil slicks - dead birds -
when they do this?" asks one
Iraqi, not unreasonably,
referring to the bunker bombing.

Don't think I'll catch any
talk shows tonight. Their
ideas won't be any better
than mine. Had a belly
full of them. Just kidding.
I love you guys. Really.
You taught me how to
think about war -but my
conclusions will be my own.

My feelings of disgust do not
mean I've got my facts straight.
I might be disgusted about
something else if I knew the
truth, assuming there is one.

Let's run a few conspiracy
theory type of items on it
for the sake of bad taste >
What if the Kuwaitis did it,
decided to stop buggering
around & attack the heart,

give dirt for dirt in a manner
Saddam would understand?

Or a Saudi Air Force bomber
paying him back for the Scud
& oil slick tactics. Wouldn't
the U.S.have to assume the
blame to protect the coalition?

Or what if Israel got to fly
just one clandestine mission
in a coalition plane on the
condition it keep out of the war?

One I've heard is> what
if Saddam arranged to
have civilians occupy
a known military target?

But no, sadly, it was
a big military blunder
needing a good kick
under the carpet as
quickly as possible.
The Good Guys did it &
damned well better stop.

Paranoid conclusions
like those above,
ringing with the ring of
suddenly revealed truth,
sometimes visit me just
before I fall asleep
after watching too many
war movies on television.

2/13/91 #4 Kuwaiti Resistance Briefing #
(a transcript)

Col. Abdullah El Kandari of the Kuwaiti Air Force tells us: Saddam Hussein continues to commit brutal atrocities against innocent Kuwaitis inside Kuwait. We have some new information. We have learned that since the beginning of the Allied air campaign there have been more than 200 people executed inside Kuwait. During the past week alone, within a 4 day period, there were 65 Kuwaiti men & women who have been executed by the Iraqis for subversion. 12 of those had throats cut & their heads removed from their bodies. Their corpses were then placed in front of their homes & were left for 36 hours for others to see.

Nevertheless, the morale of the Kuwaitis inside Kuwait remains high. While there are limited resources, they are united in their effort & are working together. Kuwaitis both inside & out of occupied Kuwait are doing everything we can to help with the liberation of our country. Since the beginning of the air campaign the focus of the media has been taken away from the pain & suffering which has been endured by the Kuwaitis as a result of Saddam Hussein's invasion of our country. The world should remember that it is the aggressor action of Saddam Hussein which has caused the pain. Saddam Hussein is responsible for this war.

Saddam Hussein has allowed controlled reports to come out of Baghdad but no photos or reports whatsoever have come out of Baghdad since the August 2cnd invasion. While we would like to challenge Saddam Hussein to show the world what

is happening inside Kuwait, we do not
fool ourself, we know Saddam Hussein
is not a person who embrace the truth.

2/14/91 #1 Schwarzkopf Storms
(an extract)

I'll say upfront I think it's a tragedy
that one human being is willing to
inflict this much punishment on the
people of this country for his own ego.
I think that's a very, very tragic thing.
As we've said all along: our fight is not
with the Iraqi people. We don't want
to damage Iraq for the next hundred
years; that's not our intention at all.
Our intention is purely to get the Iraqi
military out of Kuwait. I'll say once
again what I've said all along; we're
not indiscriminately targeting civilian
targets & I think that the very actions
of the Iraqis themselves demonstrates
that they know damn well we're not
attacking civilian targets since right
now they've dispersed their airplanes
into residential areas; they've moved
their headquarters into schools; they've
moved their headquarters into hotel
buildings; they've put guns & things
like that on top of high rise apartment
buildings. Under the Geneva Convention
that gives us a perfect right to go after
those things if we wanted to & we
haven't done it. And they know damned
well we're not targeting civilian targets
even though they're trying to make
something out of it. Just look at what
they've done on the ground & that
should tell you that they know we're

not doing it. All Saddam Hussein has
to do is get out of Kuwait & this war
is over. It's just that simple. It's
all he's got to do. Do what the U.N.
told him to do & the war's finished.

2/14/91 #2 Valentine's Day Briefing

Facts, figures, facts, figures.
Operations, abbreviations, 20
new EPWs,(Enemy Prisoners of War)
no planes to Iran.

"This concludes my remarks,"
says Brigadier General Neal,
"I'm ready for any questions."
Steel glint in the old boy's eye
today. No attempts at humor.
No Valentines in evidence.
Some sample responses >

Any option that we can pursue
that will hopefully lessen any
civilian casualties or collateral
damage, we're gonna pursue
that very aggressively. It's
a continuing effort (not just
brought about by yesterday's
unfortunate circumstance) but
that's been in our assessment
each time we assess targets &
the development of the target list;
each time we attack any target.

That's almost the same question
that was posed before your question.
(nb-as indeed it was) We continue
to re-evaluate & evaluate & assess
our target list. We change priorities;

we change attack profiles. I'm really
not geared to talk policy. Yes, Skip?

We don't know, Skip & quite honestly
we're looking into it. It happened real
early in the morning -or actually late,
around 3 o'clock in the morning.
The crash site has been secured & an
investigation is going on. (A high tech
Raven aircraft listed as combat downed)

We're not going to tell you about tanks
we've damaged. We're only going to tell
you about confirmed kills. 1300 out
of 4.000. Are there others that have
sustained damage? You're damn right
there are others that have sustained damage.

I go right back to the first question.
There's a constant review going on.
Every day the Commander in Chief is
given a briefing on recommended targets.
It's a dynamic process. It's continuous.

I'm not sure I would sign on board to
being suckered. Since August, nothing
was out of bounds as far as Saddam was
concerned as far as the use of civilians,
whether his own people or people of
the international community as hostages,
as shields to protect his installations.
This guy is not the guy in the white hat.

Someone asks the first question again
& gets roughly the same answer.

2/14/91 #3 Day Thirty Begins

Saw the term Scud Spud in Doonesbury today.

I kind of like that, we've finally got
a title, those who only watch & wonder.

Jordan's King Hussein asked
the U.N. Security Council to
investigate the Bunker Bombing.
Or was it the Shelter Bombing?
Some difference of opinion.
Charred bodies have a way
of showing up at inopportune
time thanks to instant coverage.

Fortuitous or planned,
a propaganda plum it is.
Saddam has plucked it,
pressed it to his lips,
savors the lusciousness
of temporary justification.

The use of fire bombs
to asphyxiate, drive
soldiers from holes,
& to explode mines,
perhaps indicates a
new phase of the war.

Gorbachev met with the
Kuwaiti contingent today.

Rode out to Bodega Bay
on my motorcycle, had
a cup of coffee & a hot
dog. Bought a bag of salt
water taffy for the kid.
Got back to the war.

13 protestors arrested
outside the Pentagon.

The Iraqi ambassador to the U.N.

said > "This aggression has not been
a picnic for the aggressors. The price
inflicted on them will be dear indeed."

The Mother Of All Battles rolls on.

2/14/91 #4 Straight, No Chaser

Baghdad Radio announced that:
"In order to achieve a dignified &
acceptable political settlement, the
Revolutionary Command Council has
decided to accept UN Security Council
resolution 660 of 1990, including the
clause related to Iraqi withdrawal."

Resolution 660 demands that Iraq
withdraw immediately & unconditionally
all its forces to the positions in which
they were located on 1 August 1990.

The main point of interest in the
announcement is that the Dictator
had always said he'd never give up
an inch of Iraq for any reason,
including the 19th province, Kuwait.

Marlin Fitzwater, the Spokesman
for the White House, enters the
briefing room. He has this to say:
(deep sigh) "We have not yet examined
a full, official text of the Revolutionary
Command Council statement. But it
clearly contains conditions for Iraqi
withdrawal from Kuwait. The United
Nations Security Council resolutions
are clear in their insistence that the
withdrawal be complete & unconditional.
Promises alone are not sufficient. There

must be not only agreement to comply
with all UN Security Council resolutions,
but also immediate & concrete actions
on the ground. Thank you very much."

Learned later in the day >
Mentioned as conditions of
Iraq's retreat offer are >
total U.S. withdrawal & that
Israel must withdraw from
occupied territories plus
get rid of any weapons given
it to fight the war. Also
requested are > cancellation
of all of Iraq's debts, as
well as the stipulation that
"matters return to their normal
nature, as though all this has
not happened & without this
bringing Iraq any negative
effects for any reason."

Make a better offer/
straight, no chaser.

2/15/91 #1 Barry Rubin Speaks
(an extract)

Speaking from Tel-Aviv, analyst
Barry Rubin had this to say about
the Iraqi proposal to end the war.

If you read the speech, it's a very
radical & anti-American speech
with this one paragraph embedded
in it. Iraq is going for propaganda,
to try & win support in the Arab
World, to try to get the coalition
to stop the bombing. It isn't going

to work this time. But it indicates
the bombing is hurting Iraq;
Saddam is starting to get scared
& in a week or two or three or four,
the Iraqis will make a better offer.

It's unfortunate but the reality is
that when the Iraqis start getting
hit really hard & losing equipment
& people, they start taking the
United States seriously.

The turning point which led to
the end of the Iran-Iraq war was
when the U.S. accidently shot
down an Iranian airliner. Those
who wanted to end the war went
to Ayatollah Khomeini & said:
"These Americans are ruthless &
they'll go on attacking us, so
we have to end the war." There
may be a similar situation in
Baghdad today - that they realize
how far the U.S. is going to go.

This does not mean the war is over.
This may be a turning point where
we can see the beginning of the end.

1/15/91 #2 Bush Replies to Iraq's Proposal
(a transcript)

When I first heard that statement I was happy that Saddam Hussein had seemed to realize that he must withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait. Regrettably the Iraq statement now seems to be a cruel hoax dashing the hopes of Iraq & indeed around the world. It seems there was an immediate celebratory atmosphere in Baghdad after this statement.This reflects, I think, the Iraqi people's desire to see the war end; a war the people of Iraq never sought. Not only was Iraq's

statement full of unacceptable old conditions, but Saddam Hussein has added several new conditions. We have been in touch with the members of the coalition & they recognize that nothing new is here, with the possible exception of recognizing for the first time that Iraq must leave Kuwait. Let me say once again: they must withdraw without condition. There must be full implementation of all the Security Council resolutions. There will be no linkage to other problems in the area. The legitimate rulers of Kuwait must be returned to Kuwait. Until a massive withdrawal begins, with Iraqi troops visibly leaving Kuwait, coalition forces will continue their efforts to force compliance with all the resolutions of the United Nations. But there's another way for the bloodshed to stop & that is for the Iraqi military & the Iraqi people to take matters into their own hands to force Saddam Hussein the dictator to step aside & to comply with the United Nations resolutions & then rejoin the family of peace loving nations. We have no argument with the people of Iraq. Our differences are with Iraq's brutal dictator. The war is going on schedule. Of course all of us want to see the war ended soon & with a limited loss of life & it can if Saddam Hussein would comply unconditionally with these UN resolutions & do now what he should have done long, long ago. After analysis & reading the statements out of Baghdad in their entirety, there is nothing new here. It is a hoax. There are new demands added. I feel very sorry for the people of Iraq & I feel very sorry for the families in this country who probably felt as I did this morning when they heard the television, that maybe we really had a shot for peace today. But that is not the case. We will continue to pursue our objectives with honor & decency & we will not fail.

2/15/91 # 3 Mindful

Mindful of the
mindlessness
characteristic
of this as of
any time from
back there to
way up when.

To see history
now is to see
history since
history began,
fomentings of
power thick
as the froth of
rumbling water.
This is what
history is.
History is this.

Someone has
said it before.
Someone will
say it again.
It has all
been said.

We must change
and we can't.
We never could.

I can change.
You can change.
They cannot.
You & I will
never be them.
They may be us
but they can
never be you -
can never be me.

2/15/91 #4 Day Thirty-One Begins

Weeks, not days.
Pride recaptured.
Patriotism flourishes.
Weeks, not months.

A good cause,
a short war,
a villain you can
get your teeth into.

Can exchange one
liners with the kid
bagging groceries &
appear to see eye to
eye on the subject,
hinting at a core of
more detailed personal
opinion which may,
or may not, be all
that comprehensive;
can listen to activist
friends & agree on
more than one point.
Or listen to radical
rant of genocide &
other generalities.
It's more & less
complex than that.

Exactly a month ago the U.S.
& Allies attacked Baghdad.

The world thought the war
was over this morning -
for an hour an a half.
"It's too good to be true"
said Allied soldiers who
appeared to believe it.
Pathetic momentary joy.
Shamefully a sham.
Revenge for shelter bombing?
Psychological warfare?
Wily political presentation
playing to the Arab world
so he can say: we stood up

to the biggest military force,
represented all your causes,
spit in its eye & can now
withdraw with honor?

Talk of the day.
Much pontification.

2/15/91 #5 Saturday's Facts & Figures#

76,000 sorties to date.
Couple of crashes.
No Iraqi jets sent to
Iran for safekeeping.
Continue to aggressively
interdict communications.
1 Scud into Saudi Arabia
which broke up in flight
(the Scud). 56 to date.
Blew up some trucks.
No new POWs.
Questions?

Is the ground war on hold
due to Soviet requests?

I think that's a question
better addressed at the
White House level. I'm
just a tactical man.

Would you show us some footage
of bombs missing the intended
target & hitting civilians?

We'll take it under advisement.

General Neal's right eyebrow
is riding particularly high today.

Until our leadership tells us
to halt we're going to continue
to execute the campaign plan.
I've answered your question,
I think, but you keep asking it.

>Everybody is testy today.
Reporters are testy. Neal's
testy. I'm testy. Probing
questions just land lamely.

Is it possible that clearing
mine fields may be dangerous?

It's the nature of the beast.

Was the Iraqi proposition yesterday
a ploy to slow down operations?

It might be propaganda diplomacy.

Define the Kuwaiti theater of operations.

Waves his hand at the map
"I'm giving you the Neal wave!"
Smiles. Loosens up.
"I'll look it up. I really will."

Is Saddam Hussein still alive?

I've seen nothing to indicate otherwise.

2/16/91 #1 Taking Stock

The war appears headed
for the negotiating table,
despite or because of
stepped up bombing.

Listening for a strange
music detected at the outset,
something which sounded
decidedly different than
dramatic Gulf War themes
played on CNN & other
networks between commercials.

Today's innocence is not
tomorrow's innocence, as
I wrote some weeks ago.
Here it is tomorrow by
yesterday's reckoning
and the things I know now
I would not have believed
credible even two weeks ago.

Collecting trenchant remarks
& ambiguities like an insect
collector on a nice Spring day,
I suddenly found myself
manipulated by government
with it's awesome grip on
national communication media.
War is a totalitarian art form.

2/16/91 #2 Day Thirty-Two Begins

Pentagon hints Iraq faking some
collateral damage. Blew up one
of their own mosques in Basra?
General Kelly doesn't want to go
into it & begin a round of finger
pointing. Reported 130 dead in
British bombing of an apartment
building in Fallujah, Iraq. 2 U.S.
A-10 Warthogs shot down over
Kuwait today. An F-16 C crashed

returning from a combat mission.

General Kelly says safe air
passage cannot be guaranteed
for Iraq Foreign Minister
Tariq Aziz on his trip to Moscow
day after tomorrow. 'Spec not.

14th Scud attack on Israel
since start of war. Iraq has
been saving them for the
weekends lately. A sport?

250 Anti-war demonstrators
plagued Bush with pictures
of brocolli on his getaway
to Kennebunkport, Maine.
Numerous protest marches.
A ho-hum day warwise. Not
because a lot isn't happening,
but because war has a variety
of inherent rhythms of its own;
volatile emotional peaks, such
as yesterday's hour & a half
end of the war - the preceding
day's 340 dead in the bunker
and / or shelter bombing - are
matched with valleys, like the
lull before the decision to hold
off ground war & to step up
the air campaign. Everybody's
feeling a little flat today &
prone to view the proceedings
through sceptical spectacles.

Thank you for letting me share that.

2 / 16 / 91 #3 Fourth Sunday Briefing

78,000 sorties to date.
No Allied combat losses.
No planes to Iran.
2 Scuds to Israel.
7 border engagements.
All kinds enemy stuff
taken out > 3 tanks,
2 armored personnel carriers,
1 rocket launcher, 2 bunkers,
ammo storage area, 20 EPWs
captured with 6 mortars, ammo
& documents. U.S. lost a Bradley
tank & an M1-13 w/ ground
surveillance radar, hit by
U.S. Apache helicopter resulting
in 2 KIA & 6 WIA. Investigation
ongoing to determine the etc.

A formal nod to the other branches
of the armed services & General
Neal is ready for your questions.

Who initiated the engagements?

Can't address that, I don't want
to give you the wrong answer,

I think the intention was to get
the disposition of U.S. forces
along the Iraq & Kuwaiti borders
as any prudent commander would.

The EPW's were captured by the
Apache helicopters, believe it or not.
At the destruction of the bunkers,
the EPW's immediately went into
surrender mode, dropped their
weapons & we just herded them
back with the Apaches. That's
unique. I forgot to tell you that.

Neal breaks into a beaming smile.

Is that the 1st time anyone's
been captured by Apaches
since the Indian wars?

Finally caught me on one, Rick!

The London Times says the Shelter
was not a legitimate target. Comment?

They're absolutely wrong. We remain
convinced it was a legitimate military
target. We have no doubt whatsoever.

The Pentagon will bring you evidence
Tuesday that Iraq is faking some of it's
collateral damage. I'll let them handle that.

The confusion, the fog of war, is everpresent
in the battlefield. I can't tell you with conviction
that there won't be future friendly fire casualties.

1/17/91 #1 The Secretary of State Says
(an extract)

No ceasefire. No pause.
Get out of Kuwait. If the
Soviets can do any good,
more power to 'em. We
have a campaign plan;
we've been sticking to
that plan. All along
there's been talk of an
air campaign & a ground
campaign & we're going
to stick to our campaign
plan & there's not going
to be any deviation from

that - no pausing, no
ceasefire – Iraq has to
leave Kuwait. We have
a game plan, it's working
very well & we're gonna stick to it.

Do you have a message
for Saddam Hussein?

Leave Kuwait.

We've made it clear there
would be no tears shed if
the Iraqi people decided
to change their leadership.
That's a statement of fact,
not a statement of a goal
or a war aim.

We're not taking anything
for granted. Again, going
back to our campaign plan,
we're gonna stick with that
& we're going to carry it
out, assuming there's not
full compliance with the
UN resolutions, just as
we would have from day one.

If Saddam remains in power
after the war, clearly there
would be some interest in
maintaining arms sanctions.
Having him out of there
would be a preferred result.

It was interesting to note that
at the meeting of Arab coalition
ministers yesterday, no mention
was made of the PLO, which is

quite different from their usual
practice. I think they've hurt
themselves with many of their
former Arab backers in aligning
with Iraq.

Under our proposal it was not
contemplated that the Palestinians
would be represented by the PLO.
It was contemplated that they'd
be represented by Palestinians
resident in the occupied territories.

Jordan has been cut off by
it's former supporters but
it is important that Jordan
be as stable as possible
after the war. We wouldn't
be in an attitude of somehow
wanting to punish Jordan. There
are great pressures on the King.

Having said that the reporting
coming out of Baghdad is completely
censored & distorted, it's not
my view that there ought not
to be reporters in Baghdad.

2/17/91 #2 Day Thirty-Three Begins

There was once a man
who had three camels
which he curried &
groomed with an eye
to presenting them to
Hasif Shareem in trade
for his daughter to wife.

Hearing that a tribe of

camel thieves had been
reported in the vicinity,
he decided to safeguard
his livestock. The most
valuable of the camels
he sent to his cousin
who owned a high corral
thieves could not enter.

The smallest of his camels
he left in a place where
thieves could find it,
hoping to appease them
while he hid his other
camels in an obscure
place deep in the desert.

When the thieves departed,
the man tried to claim his
camels. The cousin would
not return the first camel
and the desert refused to
return the third, for it had
wandered away on its own.

Had this man been in
possession of the wits
granted him by Allah
he would have given the
camels to Hasif Shareem
at first warning of the
marauding thieves, and
spent the nights begetting
children with comely Fatima
instead of gnashing his
teeth at the fortune which
left him bereft of both his
camels and prospective wife.

2/17/91 #3 In & Around Baghdad Today#

Gorbachev presented Aziz with
a proposal to end the war during
a 3 1/2 hour meeting in Moscow.
He expects an answer tomorrow.
No details being given presently.
A U.S. Defense Dept. official says
the diplomatic effort will have no
effect on U.S. military operations.

Iraq says should the Allies fail to
accept the proposal the war will
continue at full strength. Meaning?
1st indication from Iraq that they've
been practicing moderation so far.
An Iranian delegation is due soon
in Baghdad to follow up on their
rejected initiative of 2 weeks ago.

Air raids continue over Baghdad
overnight but seem to be focusing
on the outskirts. The people are
taking advantage of the lull to get
to the market & stock in supplies.
A lessening of tension has been
noticeable in the capitol city after
the Iraqi peace proposal despite
its rejection by Allied Leaders.
Cars driving on black market gas.

The chief of the Baghdad Medical
Institute reports on the casualties
of last weeks bunker/shelter attack,
his face a study of grim accusation:
"We have counted about 310 bodies
received to my center. Most of them
were children. .kids - 2 & a half
month old - 4 month old - 6 month
– 1 year old –3, 2, 5 years old. I

met one who lost 13, his complete
family was lost. He was the only
one who survived. He wasn't in
the shelter, actually. 13 from his
family - his total family is gone."

100 bodies have been identified &
returned to families. 13 unidentified
bodies are still in the morgue. The
rest have been buried in a mass grave.

1/18/91 #1 Bits & Snatches

Two U.S. warships, the Tripoli
& the Princeton, struck mines
in the Persian Gulf but are still
afloat. 3 injuries aboard Princeton.

Reports suggest Iraq is losing 200
tanks a day to Allied bombing.

2 bombs in London train stations,
Victoria & Paddington. An Irish
sounding voice gave warning by
phone. Civilian alert was broadcast
over the radio, but Londoners paid
no attention. 1 dead, 39 injured.

Later: The IRA, claiming responsibility
for the bombings, said it had not meant
to cause civilian casualties & that it's
warning should have been heeded.

Life imitates life.

Indications are that everything
is in place & ready for the
ground war. If nothing comes
out of the peace proposals,

not a factor in the time table
of the military prosecution,
it looks like about time to roll.

Heavy movement of coalition tanks
to the border & naval fire off
the coast of Kuwait has softened
up the coastal target area. The
air force continues to prepare
the battlefield for ground attack.
Troops are on high alert, in their
tanks at the border, ready to roll.
Supply lines will only allow the
state of alert to last 3 to 7 days
according to television strategists.

1/18/91 #2 The Usual Briefing

General Neal commences with
the usual format announcements,
air operations continue, destruction
of Republican Guard, preparation
of ground forces, strikes &
restrikes of selected targets, etc.

Bad weather causing retargeting
& cancellation of some missions
due to difficulty in positive target
identification. Allies still flew over
2400 sorties today for a total of
80,000 to date. Last night an F16
crashed over enemy held territory.
A combat loss. The pilot was
recovered in good health thanks to
search & discover units who actually
conducted the extraction of the pilot
40 miles into enemy territory. This
makes a total of 30 coalition aircraft
lost in combat, 21 U.S. & 9 Allied.

No further aircraft to Iranian bases.

Total air to air losses for Iraq
remains at 42. 36 fixed wing &
6 helicopters. 870 sorties flown
today in the Kuwaiti theater of
operations & an addition 100
against Republican Guard forces.

There was no Scud activity last night
however, during the last 24 hours we
flew 130 Scud related sorties. (What,
no Sunday Scud parties on Israel?
Just when you think you know their
modus operandi, they let you down.)

After striking mines in the gulf,
the Tripoli continues its mission.
The Princeton, a guided missile
cruiser, is at 50 percent power.

Marine Cobra attack helicopters
teamed up with Saudi, Kuwaiti &
Marine Corps observers against 6 APCs.
2 of the Armored Personnel Carriers
were destroyed, 4 returned to the North.
There were no friendly fire casualties.

1/18/91 #3 Day Thirty-Four Begins

Decontamination Zone
sign in the cellar of
bombed bunker/shelter
was in English only
writes D. S. of Mt.
Sterling Kentucky.
An ace Scud Spud
observation getting
read on CNN. Hot.

Mm– just showed
an Atom Bomb blast.
Really gorgeous but
the glassine tesseract
of the Hydrogen Bomb
seems to show portals
into angelic dimensions.

Even Generals admit certain
aspects of the war to be absurd,
cf> Neal noting "no friendly
fire casualties" today.

Statistics are accumulated
like stitches in a widow's
shawl. Tomorrow's briefing
may unravel it. Inure us.
Unpleasant discoveries for
our generation to assimilate;
to come to terms with &
learn to ignore while master
statesmen try to heal the harm.

Alternately, everyone will
more or less forget about it
six weeks after its over
except those who actually
went over to fight this thing.

2/18/91 #4 4 A.M. Morning Report

Allied bombers hit Central
Baghdad with some of the
heaviest raids of the war.
Much bombing concentrated
on the domestic airport.
Peace missions scurrying
back & forth as Allies are
poised to roll into ground

action, awaiting Bush's
command. Iraq promises
unstoppable catastrophic
surprises should it happen.

The White House's silence
on the Soviet peace plan may
mean that it is acceptable.
Or it may just mean silence.
What's in the fine print?

One Pentagon official says
the military campaign will
continue as though the peace
talks were totally non-existent.

Explosions were so loud
in Baghdad they rattled
windows in Iran. At least
17 cruise missiles fired.
Installations such as the
bunker/shelter hit last
week have been identified
& are still considered
legitimate military targets.

Figures from Iraq's deputy
Prime Minister indicate more
than 20,000 Iraqis have died
in the first 26 days of the war.
Another 60,000 reported injured.

In Israel, Palestinian children
grades 1-3 are being allowed
back to school on the West Bank.
15,000 of 120,000 Palestinian
workers are being allowed to
return to their jobs in Israel.

We remind our viewers an

Israeli military official
is in our bureau monitoring
what our correspondent reports.

2/19/91 #1 Peter Arnett Reports
(an extract)

Reid> Does it seem young
people are missing from
the streets of Baghdad, Peter?
Arnett> Yes, many young
people are missing from
the streets of Baghdad.
R> Any word on prisoners of war?
A> Not since 3 & a half weeks ago.
R> What is the degree to which you
are being monitored or censored?
A> Can I have that question again?
R> repeats.
A> This transmission is being
monitored by a Dept. of Defense
official but since the bombing
of the shelter last week there's
been a letup on the surveillance
of what we're doing. It's a much
more relaxed environment for
the time being. Video seems to
be their main source of concern.
They look at it very carefully
R> What you are allowed to see,
you are allowed to tape?
A> At this point, yes.
R> The Iraqi government does
control his actions; monitors most
of his reports. He has an Iraqi
censor by his side as he delivers them.

2/19/91 #2 Bush's Estimate

(a transcript)

I do appreciate President
Gorbachev's providing me
with a copy of his proposal,
not the Iraqi proposal, but
his proposal to Iraq, actually,
concerning the gulf, the
conflict there. We provided
last night comments to the
Soviet Union, let me just
reiterate, far as I'm concerned,
there are no negotiations.
The goals have been set out,
there will be no concessions.
Not gonna give. And so on his
proposal, President Gorbachev
asked that I keep the details
of it confidential. And I'm going
to do that. I will respect that
request in the interests of
thoroughly exploring the
initiative, but very candidly,
and I've been frank with him
on this, while expressing
appreciation for his sending
it to us, it falls far short
of what would be required.

2/19/91 #3 Day Thirty-Five Begins

Today has been a day of
waiting for diplomatic
maneuvers to end the war.
Waiting for the Dictator's
expected immediate reply
to Gorbachev's proposal
even as Bush says it
just won't wash.

The reply didn't come.

Analysts are saying
the ground war has
in reality begun, or
so strategic maneuvers
accompanied by air
power seem to suggest.
Nevertheless, a point
of no return hasn't been
reached operationally.
Allied forces retaining
the option of winding
back & assuming
defensive positions.

The erstwhile implacability
of the Dictator has been met
with a similarly perverse,
or should I say, steadfast
implacability on the part of
the U.S. Commander in Chief.
Is he learning to be an Arab?
Or is there, underneath all,
an unannounced agenda which
precludes the possibility
of Iraq retaining any trace
of its formidable armed force;
a stance which can only be
weakened by negotiations?

2/19/91 #4 Morning Murk

Radio Baghdad says Iraq repulsed
a massive ground assault across
the Southern Kuwait border last
night, inflicting heavy casualties.
U.S. says, expletives removed,

"Give me a break!" British news says forays were made to break tactical holes in the sand berm fortifications for later attack, hitting & withdrawing.

General Schwarzkopf said in the L.A. Times that the Iraqi army is on the verge of collapse. Allied military sources say Norman is speaking for himself. The official line is that the Iraqis are an effective fighting force which is still largely intact.

For the 2cnd straight night Allied forces hit Baghdad with some of the heaviest shelling of the war. Iranian newspapers said explosions were heard in Baghdad every 5 minutes for 4 1/2 hours; that military/ economic centers & residential areas were the major targets.

2 Israeli warplanes destroyed a PLO guerilla base in Lebanon yesterday.

Russian Republic President Boris Yeltsin called for Gorbachev's resignation yesterday, saying he was becoming a dictator. Pravda accuses Yeltsin of worsening the Soviet's political problems, accusing him of trying to seize power.

Iraqi response to the Soviet peace proposal is still not known. No mention of it has been made in either Iraqi news or on the radio.

Citizens seem under the impression
that the Iraqi peace proposal of
last week may be a cause for hope,
despite the intensified bombardment.

2/20/91 #1 The Pleasure's All Mine

Neal takes the podium with high good
humor to a round of applause. Lots of
laughter but we're not let in on the joke
since coverage missed the introduction.
The pleasure's all mine, believe me, he
says, finding it hard to keep a straight face
as he begins the usual format presentation.

86,000 sorties to date. No aircraft lost,
ours or theirs. No planes to Iran.1 Scud
to Israel. B52s attacked the launch site
causing several secondary explosions.
28 Iraqi tanks destroyed in a single day
long encounter, plus other significant
destruction including 3 ammo dumps.

No friendly fire casualties.

In an ongoing action north of the border
13-15 bunkers were destroyed, 450-500
prisoners were taken. 1 Allied KIA, 7 WIA.

Closing format observations give the nod
to the navy & other services. Question time.

Did Allied forces actually
enter Kuwait on this action?

A highly qualified
answer follows which is,
essentially, affirmative.

Same question in other words.

Security forces, yes, if you want
to draw that conclusion, of course.

Would you characterize the Iraqi
force as on the verge of collapse?

Some of them are, I'm sure, but I'm
not ready to say that as an armed
force the Iraqis are all ready to
drop their weapons & come forward.

There have been no reports of chemicals
in the area in which we're operating but
the aviation elements conducting the sorties
are probably not close enough to determine.

We have enough camps to accommodate
about a hundred thousand prisoners.

There'll be no diminution of our capability
to conduct a ground campaign whether we
go today, tomorrow, next week or a month
later. We're ready. Morale is not an issue.

The usual CNN disclaimer follows: The U.S.
Military allows televised coverage of only
one of the 3 daily briefings in Riyadh.
The others are not allowed to be televised
due to a request by other networks & news media.

We wouldn't want to be giving CNN
an unfair advantage in the ratings,
would we? Wouldn't be democratic.

2/20/91 #2 Day Thirty-Six Begins

No, & "I wouldn't reveal it if they did"

may or may not mean I'm lying but I'm
not lying to you about the fact I'm lying,
in fact I'm warning you that I may do
so at any point, so you can't complain
I lied to you when I'm telling you I am
but, whether I am or not, I won't say
although the fact I said NO to your
question may seem to insinuate I'm
committing myself by standing behind
that denial but this may not be the case
& you must decide whether or not
I'm lying to you about these ground
rules pertaining to evasions concerning
what may be strategic information but
may also indicate that I do not wish
to appear ignorant of that subject in
order to maintain an aura of credibility.

Nothing but brinksmanship today.
Secretary of State Baker indicates
time for negotiations is over. Aziz
on return trip to Moscow to take
Saddam's answer to Gorbachev's
proposal.The damage that bombing has
done to Iraq is said by some to be far
greater than we are allowed to know.

Wearying watching nothing happening
with such dramatic intensity as the
events of the last two days. A Crisis
feeling as in the last days before war
leading to the countdown, the pause,
& then all hell breaking loose with
every TV in the world a ringside seat.
Measured rather than random silence.
A strange music emerges, a note held
on a long breath which must break off
soon, before it begins to waver.

By conservative Pentagon

estimate, Iraq's army has
suffered 30 percent casualties.

Isthe Dictator mean
or just crazy?
He must know it's
time to go. There's
even a rumor that
he's still alive.

2/20/91 #3 Overnight Developments

Up before dawn today to catch
what's gone on overnight.
Expecting to turn on the tube
to news of full out ground
assault, instead I hear that
no bombing of central Baghdad
has occurred for the first time
since the start of the war.

The Dictator is slated to make
a radio address in 3 hours,
ostensibly to say whether he
accepts the Soviet terms for
leaving Kuwait. A million troops
face each other at the border
ready to blow each other to
Kingdom Come if he decides to
play silly buggers yet another day.

The Soviet plan has been released.
Stage One> Unconditional withdrawal
from Kuwait. Cease-Fire begins.
Moscow guarantees there will be
no attack on Iraqi troops.
Stage Two> Reparations. Annexation
of Kuwait annulled. Prisoners of war
to be discussed after withdrawal.

Guarantee of Iraq's borders.
International community to deal
with Arab-Israeli conflict. No
Soviet promise to lift arms embargo.

President Bush has added some
demands of his own to the proposal.
He wants complete withdrawal within
4 days, immediate release of all POWs
& disclosure of the locations of all mines.

Actual world news not related to
the war is running on CNN presently.
There's just not a whole lot more
to say about it until the Dictator
lets everybody know his intentions.

2/21/91 #1 "No!"

Translations of the speech still
coming in, but the gist of it is
Saddam says NO & will continue
with the Mother of All Battles,
from which he promises that
Iraq will emerge victorious.
He represents it as a defensive
measure, as he did when he
attacked Iran years ago. He
is giving us a final chance to
back out. He portrays his troops
as martyrs. For some reason
Iraqi censors are letting footage
with Baghdad citizens saying
they think Iraq should relinquish
Kuwait in the interests of peace.
He accuses the Allies of adding
more & more conditions for
withdrawal when all he wants
is peace; of wanting to strip

Iraq of power & capabilities,
of its characteristics & faith.
The liberation of Kuwait continues.

2/21/91 #2 Col. Barry Stevens Says
(transcribed from the British Briefing)

The division took part today in its 3rd artillery raid. I don't have a video. I'm sorry, because this actually was on a very much larger scale than anything we've attempted before. The whole of the division artillery was employed. That's a total of 72 guns & 12 MLRS. Indeed the scope actually was very much larger than that because we were taking part in an American inspired fire plan & so we were firing alongside & with American artillery. I can't tell you how many guns they employed but I'd take a bet that they wouldn't want to deploy anything less than we had on the ground. (This elicits an appreciative laugh from the audience.)

The aims of the fire plan really fell in line with subjects we've been discussing over the last couple of nights: to destroy their equipment, their tanks, their artillery. Also to hit their command & control assets, their headquarters; second, to hit the morale of the Iraqi soldiers. Third, to engage with counter bombardment fire, any enemy artillery positions which opened up on us. Now, within that, the targets we were going for, & they fall out of that sort of aim, are the infantry positions, artillery positions,

tank positions, headquarters, &
additionally we went for logistic
installations. The more we can wear
away at their ability to resupply their
forces, if the battle begins, the better
it's gonna be for us. We put down the
range something in excess of 1300
rounds & 140 rockets from the MLRS.

I'm aware that those statistics are
pretty dry & pretty meaningless, so
I thought what I might try & do is to
bring to life the firepower of the
division by making a comparison
between the Desert Rats, one div,
as they are today, with the firepower
which was available to their
predecessors at the battle of
El Al Amain in 1942. Now, then, the
Desert Rats were only one of eleven
divisions & 5 other all-arms brigades.

Together they formed the 8th Army
group. The total number of guns
available to the 8th Army group in
1942 was 882 precisely. The guns
available to the division today >
72 plus 12 MLRS. Miniscule. But if
we do a comparison now of the weight
of fire, & that, after all, is what is
important, what arrives at the other
end, not what dispatches it, then
we get a bit of a different picture.
The 882 guns of the 8th Army, if each
was to fire one round of ammunition,
put down a weight of fire of 11.5 tons.
If you apply the same criteria to 1st
division's artillery group, & you
allow the MLRS, a rrripple of 12
rockets each, the weight of fire is

50 tons. 4 times the weight of fire for
less than 1/10th the assets. Technology!

2/21/91 #3 Day Thirty-Seven Begins

Iraq says yes to a world response
considerably short of jubilation.
Everyone reports on the market
according to the disposition of his
own wares. The negotiating table
looks less inviting to the U.S.
government & military than the
well prepared battlefield which
must, instead, glimmer invitingly
through the haze of a mirage.
They coulda wiped the sucker out
& they know it. Now they may have
to let him walk out with his troops,
his tanks & his political power -
or face the wrath of other nations.

The Soviets are pleased because
they pulled off a political coup for
the expense of a couple of cups of
coffee & a few hours of chit-chat.

Israel would rather choke on its
own vomit than see that madman
next door with his military largely
intact. Saudi Arabia feels likewise.

Other members of the Arab coalition
don't care to go as far as the U.S.,
Saudi Arabia & Kuwait & don't mind
calling it quits & getting out of an
increasingly uncomfortable position.

Look for stepped up bombing until
a cease-fire is called, because the

U.S. is damned well going to blow up
as much military hardware as it can
get into its sights before it has to
call it a day. The process of freeing
Kuwait will at last show the hidden
hold cards on the table. The not so
secret agenda will become abundantly
clear. And the new world order, led
by the United Nations, will prevail
in a manner well calculated to prove
you can't please everybody. So what?

2/21/91 #4 Rose Garden Ultimatum

Stock market jumped 29 points upon
Bush's announcement that the Soviet
peace proposal is unacceptable. Buck
shot up 1 1/4 cents against the pound.

Saddam has 24 hours to start getting
out of Kuwait. Meanwhile our boy was
merrily running amok, torching some
140 oil wells & wrecking the whole oil
production facility of Kuwait. Word is
that thick black smoke covers the gulf.
Is this a signal he's willing to accept
that the party's over & it's time to rock
& roll? Or just a great big "GO TO HELL!"

Press Sec. Fitzwater is about to speak.
Nods to Soviet effort, but no conditions.
World needs to be assured that Iraq's
intentions are peaceful. No ground war
if Iraq accepts full scale withdrawal
to be completed by one week. Within 48
hours, all forces out plus defenses along
borders, etc. Within a week all forces
must return to August 1st positions.
POWs & 3rd country prisoners to be

released within 48 hours. Booby traps
to be dismantled & removed including
those in oil fields & sea mines. Allow
coalition aircraft exclusive control of
airspace. Free all Kuwaiti citizens &
return legitimate government to power,
renouncing all claims to the territory
& Allies will refrain from attacking
withdrawing forces so long as no further
aggressive action is initiated anywhere.

Pentagon officials are not optimistic
the Dictator takes this very seriously.
His ambassador says one thing but
it's possible the boss has other plans.
Daytime bombing of Baghdad resumes.

2/22/91 #1 Today's Innocence Perturbed

Sitting here innocently watching
the Pentagon Briefing, clucking
over the 200 burning oil wells &
stuff, thinking how good it is that
it'll be over by noon tomorrow
(but was I really thinking that
- not all that very deep down I
have to admit) when they cut into
the cool, dispassionate serenity of
the briefing, where things often
appear, momentarily, to make some
kind of sense, with a statement
from the Revolutionary Council
calling Bush a friend of the devil
& an enemy of God, just ripping
his reputation & those of his
frustrated allies to shreds.

"All he's achieved is not more than
sending his crows to implement a

cowardly plan of destruction against
the civilian property of the Iraqis."
He seems to infer that the burning
oil wells are our crime as well, but
it's not clear. "Bush knows he lacks
the legitimacy to face the army of
Jihad & faith & is probably adopting
his present stance so he may enjoy
his weekend holiday."(Sudden sound
of a bombing raid begins in the
background,as though in angry
response from an offended Bush.)
"We would like to affirm that Iraq is
for peace & is working seriously to
support the Soviet initiative. Not out
of fear of Bush's threats or a sign of
respect for him. He has tried his bad
luck using whatever his bloodstained
hands could catch off, criminal means
& weapons. Bush even did not skip
destroying what the most savage
saboteurs & invaders avoided to destroy.

"If Bush denies this we call upon
Security Council to form a neutral
committee to membership of which
we propose China & USSR. The talk
of attack with what Bush calls Scud
missiles is also ridiculous. Does Bush
imagine that Iraq has to keep silent
while Bush commits aggression against
Iraqis & launches ugly childish statements?"

2/22/91 #2 Day Thirty-Eight Begins

Aware that my sensibilities might
suffer a sea change through the
type & quality of input provided
them by my attempt to articulate

the passage of war. Nearly three
quarters of the new year spent
focused on unfolding of events
beyond my power to grasp except
in the most abstract & general
fashion. This is as true of the
statesmen, pundits & reporters
who furnish me with details &
ways to interpret them as it
must be true of the pilots who
fly the sorties over Baghdad
(91,000 plus now) & soldiers
who now stand ready to make
good on the President's ultimatum.

Less than 13 hours remain for
the decision very few believe
the Dictator will make, which
is to pull out on a timetable
designed to force him to leave
most of his equipment behind.

The Soviets have warned that the
world will hold U.S. accountable for
avoidable catastrophe, predictable
should Bush proceed in such a manner.
We find their meddling bothersome,
shrugging it off with polite firmness.
This is not our idea of victory. The
real agenda is now out in the open;
one with which our allies concur:
he is to be rooted out & rendered
powerless. Punished. Humiliated.
Are we right in doing this? The
soldiers who will pay the real
price seem to believe it, unless
the footage I see is badly slanted.

Sleep will not come easily tonight.
My eyes will fly open long before

dawn & I'll be at my desk ready
to witness the probable silence
before the storm. Many unforeseen
events have happened in the 37
days of this war. The Scuds. The
lack of counter-attack. A televised
interview with Saddam. The oil spill.
Planes to Iran. What does tomorrow
hold that is not at all what would
be expected? I think surprises
are the order of this war. Like
awaiting Christmas morning in Hell.

2/22/91 #3 No Alternative

Presented myself before dawn as predicted. As I click on the TV, Vitaly Ignatenkow, Gorbachev spokesman, appears to be pleading to save the world from bloodshed. "I hope the remaining hours will not be lost in vain -" A Chicago Tribune reporter asks him a vain question > "Do you wish now you'd worked closer with the U.S.?" "Yes, but that's what has been done." "Are you doing one thing in private & another in public?" asks another."I don't want you to understand the situation in those terms." "Will the Soviet Union continue to support the United States in its previous stance- - -"

Satellite feed to Moscow has just been lost. Getting pretty deep, wasn't it? I have a feeling we weren't meant to hear another damned word. Let's hear the CNN commentator instead. "A very sombre appraisal from the Soviet spokesman," says the correspondent. "An interesting warning from the Soviet leader."

"People seem to be coming to a belated realization that this is the real thing,"says sultry Christiane Amanpour from Baghdad.

Exactly 3 hours to the deadline.

"No appearance of pull-out action at all" says correspondent Rick in his signature well starched desert shirt. Of course not. Of course not. Hasn't anyone been listening to what they've been saying?

"It was a philosophical talk from Ignatenkow,"says Steve in Moscow, reporting from behind professorial horn rims. Seemed so to me too.

From Saudi Arabia, Charles says: "Only chance for peace is if they pack up now. War may be inevitable. Some say we've just given them more time to prepare but It's going to be like hitting them in the face with baseball bat."

"A feeling of inevitability here," says Linda in appropriately muted dark blue sweater, from Jerusalem. "Most believe it's the only way to get them out of Kuwait - a normal day in Israel."

"Convinced they're fighting for their faith & their Motherland," says a uniformed officer from some other country, maybe Soviet.

Some stock Saddam the Monster footage from the CNN library. The propaganda machine is in full swing. Well, this is what I wanted to examine, isn't it? Here it is & welcome to it. No sanity plus.

Two & a half hours to go. Clicking around the channels.

They may be fighting the real thing but American Troops are also playing computer games, thanks to corporate America. They also have playing cards, courtesy of - click

America may have many, many days, but they will be full of trouble says Martin Luther King on VH1 - click

The press did tremendous damage to us in Vietnam says someone on C-Span - click

Some of the war's heaviest bombing last night (CBS) not a great deal of encouraging news from the Pentagon - Iraqi forces still showing feeble signs of resistance - possibly the biggest action since the invasion of Normandy about to be visited on a beaten 3rd world country.

Nothing but propaganda across the channels. Tell you what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna turn this absurdist horror show off for awhile. Dawn is showing through a blue gray mist.
Back in awhile. Why? I can't stay away.

No alternative.

2/23/91 #1 Business As Usual#

Caught the end of Neal's daily briefing.
This man ranks at the top of the U.S.
Credibility Arsenal. He makes me not
know what to believe. I trust him; there's
never any sign of deceit, but then again,
there wouldn't be, would there? Modest,
factual, neither a joker nor humorless.

Not working from tapes today. Stuff too
immediate to be going back checking on
what was said while missing what is
being said. Some talk about mass
executions being carried on in Kuwait -
a reporter suggests the purpose is to get
rid of people who know too much about
Iraqi atrocities; silence them forever
& burn the evidence. Horrifying if so;
horrifying if not so but put forward
as factual, as justification for any
& all atrocities we may commit in turn.
Easy on this one. I don't know & don't
want to let my depression get the better
of whatever objectivity I have left.

U.N. Security Council to meet behind
closed doors at 11th hour (now) & look
at new Soviet proposal, drafted overnight,
& Iraq's response to it. Hope? Not very.

I gotta go back & watch tape on Neal.

A right wing ex-general is pontificating
on CNN & I don't need to hear it. 94,000
sorties. 2,900 last night. 1200 over Kuwait,
a new record. Total tank kills: 1,685. 925 APV.
1485 artillery pieces. A single Scud was fired
& broke up over the Saudi desert. 2100 EPWs
under coalition control. No friendly casualties.
190 oil well fires as of today. Pictures
& charts of burning wells. Seems like a
terror campaign is going on in Kuwait.
Any questions? "Your personal feelings as
the deadline approaches? Any advice, as
another military man, for Saddam Hussein?"

Neal, caught off guard by this panel show type
question thinks a bit & replies: I think You give
him too much credit calling him a military man.
I call myself a military professional & I'm not
sure I'd attach that title to him. We're just doing
what we've done for 38 days now. Beyond that I
wouldn't want to comment any further.

2/23/91 #2 Minutes to Go

Not months, not weeks
but hours & minutes;
"weigh everything" was
Gorbachev's last advice
to ambassador Tariq Aziz.

Saddam cannot politically afford
the Mother Of All Retreats, says
Prof. Baram of Israel's Haifa Univ.

11:30 Humanitarian concern that
we move quickly because of reported
atrocities in Kuwait.

11:31 Live video of air bombardment

over Baghdad. Huge black cloud rising
into sky. Iraqi citizens apparently
did not know there was a deadline.

11:40 Something very big blown up
with lots of secondary explosions.

11:43 Huge fireballs says Arnett. "I
don't know what they are & wouldn't
be allowed to tell you if I did".

11:45 Arnett is handed an announcement
that Iraq has decided to co-operate with
religious & military leaders to fight for
an independent Kuwait rather than an Iraqi
annexation. A National Democratic Gov't.

11:48 New air raid.

11:51 Air raid sirens in Tel-Aviv. People
told to go to sealed rooms & don gas masks.

11:55 Israelis said to be relieved
Saddam has not accepted deadline.

11:59 Scud attack on Israel

12:00 Deadline

Right on the deadline button
a big explosion, says Arnett,
probably a cruise missile.

12:01 From the Security Council: Iraqi
Ambassador has responded favorably
to the American statement. Which one?
What? Who? Where? Surrender?

2/23/91 #3 A Possible Scenario

40,000 Kuwaiti men being
rounded up by Iraq for what
purpose? Soldiers for an ersatz
National Democratic movement?

Was Aziz empowered to
accept the U.S. ultimatum
at the last moment if all
else failed? If so, no troops
are moving out of Kuwait.

Here's a possible scenario:
Saddam pays no attention to
the U.S. proposal, accepts
subsequent fire & damage,
takes captured Kuwaiti men
of military age, which he'll
call, for arguments sake,
the New Democratic Kuwaiti
Liberation Army - loads 'em
on his tanks & equipment &
then pulls out of Kuwait on
the Soviet timetable, thereby
gaining human shields for
his month long withdrawal
& forcing Soviet assistance
by adhering to the terms of
what is, after all, an agreement
between Iraq & Moscow, as
has been made clear before.

If this turns out to be what
he's doing, it just might work
unless stopped dead in his
tracks by immediate invasion.

This would put Allies in the
thankless position of fighting
for the re-establishment of the

corrupt Emirate of Kuwait while
Saddam dons a white hat &
battles for a democratic form
of government in the country.

2/23/91 #4 Rampant Paranoia, Pt. 2

Where was I? Oh, yes. My
paranoid conspirators plot
of the trick up the Dictator's
sleeve. Been sitting around
dazzled by the audacity of it
& wondering what else would
be entailed. How about: he
invites the world news staff,
kindly allowed into Baghdad
to cover the war, to join the
triumphal People's Army
convoy? He certainly does
knows how to retain large
numbers of unwilling guests.

Would he also invite the
Allied POWs? That might
be stretching it a bit,
unless he gets their
agreement - & it might
be he knows how to do
that, remembering the
alacrity with which he
converted them to his
way of thinking at capture.
That might make it a bit
difficult for anybody to
use firepower on the convoy,
even if Soviets take a dim
view of implementing their
peace proposal, I'd suppose.

Excuse all this flapping on
but there's nothing much on
TV except a lot of confusion
& hot air. Word is out that
Stormin' Norman can begin
execution of the ground war
campaign at will on orders
given him several days ago
anticipating Iraq's refusal
to accept immediate &
unconditional humiliation.

Re-establishment of the
cold war would be an
incidental benefit.

2/23/91 #5 Charge!
(transcript of President Bush's address)

Yesterday after conferring with my
senior national security advisers &
following extensive consultations
with our coalition partners, Saddam
Hussein was given one last chance,
set forth in very explicit terms, to do
what he should have done more than
6 months ago: withdraw from Kuwait
without condition or further delay &
comply fully with the resolutions passed
by the United Nations Security Council.

Regrettably, the noon deadline passed
without the agreement of the government
of Iraq to meet demands of United Nations
Security Council resolution #660 as set forth
in specific terms spelled out by the coalition
to withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait.

To the contrary what we have seen is a

redoubling of Saddam Hussein's efforts
to destroy completely Kuwait & its people.
I have therefore directed General Norman
Schwarzkopf in conjunction with coalition
forces, to use all forces available, including
ground forces, to eject the Iraqi army from
Kuwait. Once again this was a decision made
only after extensive consultations within our
coalition partnership.

The liberation of Kuwait has now entered
a final phase. I have complete confidence
in the ability of the coalition forces swiftly
& decisively to accomplish their mission.
Tonight, as this coalition of countries seeks
to do that which is right & just, I ask only
that all of you stop what you are doing &
say a prayer for all the coalition forces &
especially for our men & women in uniform
who this very moment are risking their lives
for their country & for all of us. May God
bless & protect each & every one of them
& may God bless the United States of America.

2/23/91 #6 Day Thirty-Nine Begins

Ode on the Commencement of the Ground Campaign

Victory is certain.
Nothing will change.
Here & there vows
will be sworn: it
will never happen
again! And then it
will happen again
and new vows be made.

Despite this or that
effort at avoidance,

efforts made in faith
both good and bad:
the columns roll,
trenches yawn,
flash steely teeth,
snap up their meat.

Sing, Muse, of death
in battle and of the
shining wreaths of
victory. Of Soldier,
Sailor and Marine, of
Aviator and of Enemy.
of flashing bayonet
and field artillery.

Sing of honor and
dishonor; injustice
and oppression; of
wrong addressed in
blood more crimson
than the sun rising
through the smoke
of battle shriven.

Hail Queen Victory
in her raiment of
multicolored flames,
from dark ascended
to consort with destiny.

2/23/91 #7 Initial Reports From the Front

"I expected them to have
more artillery. I expected
more incoming & we really
didn't see any. I think we
beat 'em up pretty bad with
the air war. I (sighs deeply)

think they're probably pretty
demoralized right now but I
don't want to underestimate
'em. I mean, they've still got
plenty of weapons. U.S. weapon
systems they can use on us.
This is what I get paid to
do so I guess I'm doing it,"
says a marine captain.

"Right now I feel sorry for the
people who are remaining on
the enemy side," says a marine
sergeant, "because we're gonna
wipe 'em out, it's just a matter
of time. It's unfortunate one of
our vehicles hit a land mine
back there, but luckily nobody
was hurt. We're just gonna
walk through the country
and liberate Kuwait."

"Of course I've never been to
combat before," says another
marine, forking his lunch out
of an aluminum bag, "but then
again it's not over yet either,
so - I don't know. It's just
not as tough as I'd thought.
I'm ready to go home, just
like everybody else. Seeing
all those EPWs coming over
the hill it's a good sight &
I just hope we see more of 'em."

1/24/91 #1 Brown Out

For the remainder of the hour
we will look at how children

are coping with the crisis.

Sitting down to look at tape
I've been rolling overnight,
1st day of ground war stuff.
Realizing that pickings will
get mighty slim, I figured
it'd take a lot of tape to
get a little information.

Defense Sec. Cheney announced
a news blackout last night &
suspension of regular briefings.

I guess it's safe to assume
what we do get in the way of
footage from the front will be,
perhaps inevitably, propaganda.
What is frustrating for news
reporters will be ok for my
purposes. Strange Music
aside, this whole business
of propaganda is interesting.

How is it to be done in such
a manner as to be non-obvious?
What will its various intentions
be? Who are its targets? How
will certain proscribed bits
of information get through
anyway? How much of that
will be disinformation made
to look like clandestine facts?

Initial reports suggest that
the enemy is hungry, scared,
demoralized but potentially
very dangerous. Caught off
guard & brutally pounded
from an unexpected direction

by our warships from waters
painstakingly cleared of mines.

2/24/91 #2 Saddam's Address

Short & salient it crackled
over radio Baghdad. As best
I can collect the bits & scraps
of the translation, pieced
together from many different
incomplete reports, he said:

"Fight them, Iraqis, Oh Iraqis,
fight them with all the power
you have & all struggle for
everything & all the faith you
have in a people that believes
in God & in His dignity & His
rights to choose & select &
make His own decisions!
Fight them, brave Iraqis!
The men of the Mother of
Battles & the (unclear) of
battle - fight them of your
faith in God! Fight them!

"Bush & his stooges, Fahd the
villain, they have decided to
commit a crime of shameful
disgrace. They have committed
a tragedy, those cowards who
have become very skillful in
evil doing & treachery after
they left all paths of good &
humanitarianism. They have
betrayed us & started the ground war.

"At the time when the
Security Council was

meeting to discuss the
peaceful Soviet initiative
which we have supported,
the treachery began
by the treacherous.

"They betrayed everybody,
but God Almighty Allah
is stronger than everyone
& He is the only one who
is always watching, capable
of Everything, the Almighty,
& He will put an end to the
invasion & will give them
disgrace & frustration & they
will be defeated & vanquished,
these treacherous traitors!"

2/24/91 #3 Communique

The first substantial military communique
out of Baghdad: The Allies have begun their
attack against Infantry Divisions numbers
8, 14, 18, 26, 29 & 45. These are all infantry
troops part of the Iraqi 1st, 3rd & 7th Army Corps.

Divisions 8, 26, 29 & 45 are fighting strongly
& the battle could end up benefiting them.
Divisions 14 & 18 are under extremely heavy
attack by Coalition forces & required a huge
volume of fire just to contain the advance.

An attack was launched on the island of
Faylakah at 4 a.m. today but contrary to
Allied claims, the island is still in Iraqi
hands. The fighting is still contained to
only a few zones. We could say that the
enemy is still bleeding in those zones.
Iraqi troops are in a very good situation &

can face the enemy troops without any doubt.

2/24/91 #4 Day Forty Begins

Large sections of Kuwait in flames.
4 luxury hotels. Wholesale murder
of citizens. Several Scuds to Israel.
Glowing generalities of Allied
success through a blackout cloud
said to be nearly %100 effective.

In the resultant mystery all are
free to believe what they wish.
Exultation reigns, but not with
the innocence of 40 days ago.
Point of exhaustion surpassed,
it has become a new way of being.

This months innocence is
not last months innocence.
Bits of wisdom adhere.
Points of view sharpened.

Nothing on television.
Pundits & propaganda,
ambassadors galore,
a dozen heads of state.

What to think of this war
without General Neal's dry
but amusing perspective to
accept or reject? Guideless.

Public radio's reasoned,
measured tones stress
different details. Less
emphasis on military
superiority, more on
the ethics & morality

of the situation.

Eventually, I return
to my own thoughts.

2/24/91 #5 Morning Reports

Allies 100 miles into Kuwait & Iraq. Republican Guards finally respond with 80 tanks moving south from the Iraq border toward Allied forces in Kuwait. 14,000 Iraqi POWs taken. A woman has flown a combat mission for the 1st time in history. Coalition casualties said to be remarkably light. Brits shot down a Silkworm missile 30 seconds away from a coalition warship.

Radio Baghdad reports that Iraq has absorbed the Allied offensive. Fierce battle of legendary proportions in Iraqi 3rd Corps area contained & continuing. A PLO representative said an attempt to take Nasiriyah, near Basra, by airborne troops was repelled. Iraq's newspapers carry claims of victory, crushing Allies & sending them back across the border. No reference to captures or casualties. The citizens of Baghdad know very well that BBC reports of troops surrendering in large numbers is a big lie. There is a feeling of relief that the front of battle has shifted elsewhere. Outdoor markets are bustling. A sense of normalcy returns.

Saudi Arabia briefing speaks of murder, rape & torture in Kuwait City but says that Saudi forces abide by the golden rule of battle: to harm no civilians if

this is in any way possible. The reason
Allied casualties are light is not because
the Iraqis are not good soldiers, but that
they don't believe in what they fight for.
Iraqi POW count now up to 20,000.

Allied planes have now pounded the 80
Republican Guard tanks mentioned above.
The world stock market is encouraged by
the ground war. Tokyo market average
closed at its highest peak of the year.

Scud attack just killed at least a dozen U.S.
soldiers in a housing compound in Dhahran.
40 are unaccounted for.

2/25/91 #1 Brief Briefing

Neal's lines of interdiction
once more furrow his brow:
Let me first qualify my remarks
by reminding you that the
battlefield is a dynamic
& everchanging place &
these initial reports are
just that: initial reports.
Tremendous success.
Entire battalions captured.
4 U.S. servicemen killed
& 21 wounded in action.
Initial reports only.
3,000 missions flown,
1300 in Kuwaiti Theater
of Operations (KTO).
270 Iraqi tanks out
including 35 T-72s.
Conservative figures.
4 aircraft downed. Of
5 pilots, 3 were rescued.

Terrorism continues as
the only Iraqi success
to report to date. Over
600 fires burning in KTO.
517 are wellheads.
Numerous facilities being
systematically destroyed.
Reports of atrocities continue.
To date we have employed
only a small part of our
total combat power. There
is much more to come.

No sign of Iraqi air force.
U.S. & Coalition forces
are attacking with an
aggressive spirit & we're
meeting with the enemy
& we're not having any
problem to date destroying him.

2/25/91 #2 Saddam Surrenders?

Baghdad radio announces: An official
has said the following: In the name of
Allah most merciful & compassionate,
our armed forces have done their combat
duties in an attempt to stop the forces of
evil & aggression. They have fought bitterly
& bravely & valiantly which will be recorded
in the annals of history in letters of light. On
this basis & because our political leadership
had emphasized its approval of withdrawal in
accordance with United Nations resolution
number six hundred & sixty through the
acceptance of the Soviet peaceful initiative.

Therefore orders have been issued to our

armed forces to withdraw in an organized
manner to the positions they were in before
the first of August 1990. This is considered
a practical & a positive response to U.N.
resolution 660. The spokesman has underlined
the fact that: our armed forces, which have
proved their ability to fight & to stand
steadfastly, will confront any attempt to
get at it during its implementation of the
withdrawal order & will fight with its usual
bravery & valiancy which makes its withdrawal
an organized one, an honorable one. The Iraqi
News Agency has come to know that the Iraqi
foreign minister has informed the Soviet minister
of this decision this evening which is a practical
response to U.N. resolution 660 & the foreign
minister has asked to transmit the message from
President Saddam Hussein to President Gorbachev
asking him to use his good efforts to endeavor to
bring about a cease fire,to put an end to the
criminal behavior of the United States & its
allies & its supporters. This is Radio Iraq,
the voice of the masses, from Baghdad.

* * *

Skepticism prevails.The White House wants to
hear it authoritatively from Iraqi officials.
No further statements will be issued tonight.

"You expect more when you've gone to the
lengths we've gone," says a senior official,
inferring withdrawal is no longer enough.

Kremlin sources say they received a
communique several hours ago from Iraqi
officials saying they're ready to pull out.

U.S. officials privately say they can withdraw
without weapons, tanks or armor if they want to.

2/24/91 #3 Day Forty Ends

Getting all set for a lull in the war,
it appears to be ending instead.
Large numbers of trucks & tanks
head north from Kuwait. Still no
official word. Statement from the
White House due in 10 minutes.
Scud on the barracks about the
only success Saddam can claim.
The Mother of All Battles can
claim the first woman soldier,
Major Rossi made 3 helicopter
runs to the front delivering shells
& fuel to landed airborne troops.

Here's Fitzwater, Bush's Press Sec. with
the official word. How will they put it?

"We continue to prosecute the war.
We have heard no reason to change that.
And because there is a war on, our first
concern must be the safety & security
of United States & coalition forces.

"We don't know whether this most recent
claim about Iraqi withdrawal is genuine.
We have no evidence to suggest the Iraqi
army is withdrawing. In fact Iraqi units
are continuing to fight.

"Moreover we remember when Saddam Hussein's
tanks pretended to surrender at Khafji
only to turn & fire. We remember the Scud
attacks today & Saddam's many broken promises
of the past. There are at least an additional
22 dead Americans tonight who offer silent
testimony tothe intentions of Saddam Hussein.

"The statement out of Baghdad today
says that Saddam Hussein's forces will
fight their way out while retreating.
We will not attack unarmed soldiers in
retreat. But we will consider retreating
combat units as a movement of war. The
only way Saddam Hussein can persuade
the coalition of the seriousness of his
intention would be for him personally
& publicly to agree to the terms of
the proposal we issued on February 22.

"And because the announcement from Baghdad
referred to the Soviet initiative, he must
personally & publicly accept explicitly all
relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions,
including especially U.N Security Council
resolution 662 which calls for Iraqi recession
of its purported annexation of Kuwait. And
United States, er, I'm sorry, U.N. Security
Council resolution 674 which calls for
Iraqi compensation to Kuwait & others."

Interesting to hear that half a dozen times
in order to transcribe it. All the nuances.
Transcribing such key statements shows
a whole new way to look at words. Several
voices are apparent in the fabric of the speech.
Saddam's many broken promises of the past
is definitely a Presidential turn of phrase.

I conclude that Arabic is difficult to render
into English; too figurative for Western ears.
Their verbal ideographs find no easy place to
lodge in an American General's imagination.

2/25/91 #4 Midnight Address

Last Night, on Radio Baghdad,
Saddam made a statement
I'm gradually assembling
as random paragraphs
are made available on CNN:

"At the beginning, we should say
that on this day, the present day,
when our valiant armed forces will
complete their withdrawal & pull
out from Kuwait, on this day, in
our struggle against aggression &
the ranks of atheism & infidelity,
a hateful coalition made of 30
countries which have officially
declared & waged war against us
under the leadership of the U.S.A.
our fighting of them will today
have extended to a period of time
for the first month of this year
starting from the 16th & 17th of
January to the present moment.
On the 8th of August 1989 that
Iraq legally & constitutionally took
over Kuwait & that it continued to
be part of Iraq until last night,
Kuwait was part & parcel of Iraq,
until the Iraqi withdrawal started.
These glorious days will continue
in the present & the future to tell
the story of a truly sincere & faithful
people believing in the will of God
& what He wants, believing in the
values of the Arab Nation, its
leadership rule for this nation & for
the values of the Islamic homeland
in its true principles & what these
principles should be like."

From the sound of it, the Dictator
wants to remove troops from Kuwait
& roll back North to defend Iraq.

Soviet U.N. Ambassador Belonogov says:
"The Iraqi troops are leaving Kuwait
& are moving in the direction of
their own Iraqi territory & I do not
question in any way the correctness
of what was said in the statement
by Saddam Hussein, in the message
by the Iraqi President to our Embassy
& what was stated by the Baghdad
Radio today about an order being
issued to the troops to leave Kuwait.
I cannot question the words said
by Saddam Hussein just half an
hour ago, maybe slightly more than
half an hour ago, where he said the
withdrawal of the troops from Kuwait
will continue & it would be completed.

"We proceed from the premise
that this new step on the part
of Iraqi leadership will satisfy
all the interested parties. I
would also like to inform you
that immediately after this
message became known in
Moscow we officially informed
the United States about the
fact that Iraq began to comply
& implement the corresponding
resolution of the Security Council,
660."

Later Ignatenko, speaking for
Gorbachev said: "A few hours ago
Saddam Hussein announced that
withdrawal of troops would be

completed today. All this seriously
changes the entire situation in
this area & it also changes both
the military situation & there
are some reports coming from the
Security Council session. Two
sessions have been held. These
meetings discuss the compliance
of Iraq with all the Security Council
resolutions, that is all twelve & not
just #660. Yemen & Cuba stand for
immediate cease fire whereas the
United States & Belgium request to
postpone the meeting of the Security
Council for consultations & they
insist on firm guarantees that Iraq
would comply with all resolutions
of the Security Council."

Q: Who missed the chance for peace,
the U.S or Iraq?
A: Saddam Hussein missed the
chance for peace.
Q: Does the Soviet Union demand
withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq?
A: No.
Q: Is the Soviet Union in favor of
immediate cease fire?
A: Yes, of course we are in favor.

So much is happening today I have to
write my own newspaper just to keep up,
leaving reports of vicious atrocities in
Kuwait City to someone else to report.
It looks like the city is more or less
free of Iraqi presence at this point,
although they've taken hostages along.

At the moment U.S & British armored units
in S. Iraq are racing towards the Euphrates

in an attempt to block the retreat of Republican Guard tanks. Coalition forces are nearing Kuwait City & intend to encircle it. More than 25,000 Iraqi prisoners have been taken.

A new communique from Iraq,
delivered to Peter Arnett, who reads:
"Despite our announcement for a withdrawal that was repeated in the President's speech, we are asserting that the enemy, the Allies, are still interfering in the withdrawal of our forces. The enemy air force is still attacking our forces despite their withdrawal.
The enemy armor is still shooting at the withdrawing forces, specifically the Allies attack the 48th Infantry Division & its headquarters despite the fact the communique says the division was obviously preparing to withdraw. Our forces will continue their withdrawal despite what is happening & its withdrawal will be organized within today & into the coming night."

Viewers can see President Bush through a bough of cherry blossoms as he stands behind a window of the White House.
The door opens & out he comes to say what he thinks of Saddam's maneuver.
He isn't smiling:

"I have a brief statement to make today. Saddam's most recent speech is an outrage. He is not withdrawing. His defeated forces are retreating. He is trying to claim victory in the midst of a rout & he is not voluntarily giving up Kuwait. He is trying to save the remnants of power & control in the Middle East by every means possible & here too Saddam Hussein will fail. Saddam is not interested in peace, only to regroup &

fight another day & he does not renounce Iraq's claim to Kuwait. To the contrary, he makes clear that Iraq continues to claim Kuwait. Nor is there any evidence of remorse for Iraq's aggression or any indication that Saddam is prepared to accept the awful consequences of that aggression. He still does not accept U.N. Security Council resolutions or the Coalition terms of February 22cnd including the release of our POW's, all POW's, 3rd country detainees & an end to the pathological destruction of Kuwait. The Coalition will therefore continue to prosecute the war with undiminished intensity. As we announced last night we will not attack unarmed soldiers in retreat. We have no choice but to consider retreating combat units as a threat & respond accordingly. Anything else would risk additional United States & Coalition casualties. The best way to avoid further casualties on both sides is for the Iraqi soldiers to lay down their arms as nearly 30,000 Iraqis already have. It is time for all Iraqi forces in the theater of operation, those occupying Kuwait, those supporting the occupation of Kuwait, to lay down their arms. And that will stop the bloodshed. From the beginning of the air operation nearly 6 weeks ago I have said that our efforts are on course & on schedule. This morning I am very pleased to say that Coalition efforts are ahead of schedule. The liberation of Kuwait is close at hand. And let me just add that I share

the pride of all of the American
people in the magnificent, heroic
performance of our armed forces.
May God bless them & keep them."

He turns quickly & leaves the platform.
A voice shouts after him: State your goals,
Sir! Are you trying to get Saddam Hussein?

2/26/91 #1 Yogi Bear Briefing

I'm going to spill all the
operational beans within
the next 24 or 48 hours but
let there be no mistake, the
war is not over, says Neal.
Portions of the Iraqi army
are still in Kuwait, including
Kuwait City, & remain a
threat to our coalition forces
& to the Kuwait City populace.
Our campaign plan is ahead of
schedule & we continue our
attacks from the land & the
sea & the air & will continue
them until otherwise directed.
Operational security considerations
remain in effect & as such will
limit the level of detail in which
I'll be able to describe what is
happening on the battlefield.
Let me again remind you that
the battlefield situation is
dynamic, everchanging,
& my comments are mostly
due to initial reports &
therefore are likely to change.

28 killed, 100 wounded

in yesterday's Scud attack.

Now into 3rd day of ground
campaign. We continued our
attacks throughout last night
& continue today, defeating
Iraqi forces throughout the KTO.

Coalition forces have destroyed
or rendered ineffective 21 Iraqi
divisions. As predicted by General
Schwarzkopf the other day,
the remainder of their military
is collapsing across the front.

Saddam Hussein has described
what is occuring as a withdrawal.
By definition, a withdrawal is when
you pull your forces back not under
pressure by the attacking forces.
Retreat is when you're required
to pull your forces back as required
by action of the attacking forces.
The Iraqi army is in full retreat.

Early this morning the British
1st Armored Division engaged
a rather large force & destroyed
40 Iraqi tanks.

A tank battle is going on,
as we speak, in the Kuwaiti
International Airport with Marine
forces experiencing good success.

Coalition forces have destroyed
more than 400 tanks & numerous
other vehicles & weapon systems
& captured over 30,000 enemy POWs.

Still only 4 KIA & 21 WIA,
not including the soldiers
killed in the Scud attack.

Yesterday we flew over 3,000
missions again, including
1400 in the KTO. Over half
were close air support. We
continue today at the same pace.

We hope we will be able to give
a complete brief on our scheme
of maneuver & results within
the next 48 hours.

Q: - engaged Republican Guards?
A: - with the same level of success
as other engagements -outflanking
them & destroying them in place.

Q: Is the end near?
A: I think I'll use Yogi Bear: it's
not over till it's over. That's not
being flippant. We've got to be
very careful. There's still people
engaged in combat out there & until
he's agreed to the resolutions by the
U.N. or until we defeat every member
of his armed forces, it's not over.

590 oil wells burning. Substantial
number of facilities destroyed. Tank
farms burning. Refineries shut down
with extensive damage. Another
destroyed. Burning storage tanks.
As they exit they attempt to destroy
the infrastructure of Kuwait.

Until he indicates a desire to end
the war through acceptance of all

the conditions we will use every
means available to destroy him.

2/26/91 #2 Terms of Surrender

(transcript of President's speech)

"Kuwait is liberated. Iraq's army is
defeated. Our military objectives are
met. Kuwait is once more in the hands
of Kuwaitis, in control of their own destiny.
We share in their joy, a joy tempered only
by our compassion for their ordeal. Tonight
the Kuwaiti flag once again flies above the
capitol of a free & sovereign nation & the
American flag flies above our embassy.

"7 months ago America & the world drew
a line in the sand. We declared that the
aggression against Kuwait would not stand.
And tonight America & the world have
kept their word. This is not a time of
euphoria, certainly not a time to gloat.
But it is a time of pride. Pride of our
troops. Pride of our friends who stood
with us in the crisis. Pride in our nation
& the people whose strength & resolve
made victory quick, decisive & just. Soon
we will open wide our arms to welcome
back to America our magnificent fighting
forces. No one country can claim this victory
as its own. It was not only a victory for Kuwait
but a victory for all the Coalition partners.

"This is a victory for the United Nations. For
all mankind. For the rule of law & for what
is right. After consulting with Secretary of
Defense Cheney, the Chairman of the Joint
Chiefs of Staff General Powell & our Coalition

partners, I am pleased to announce that at midnight tonight, eastern standard time, exactly 100 hours after ground operations commenced & 6 weeks since the start of Operation Desert Storm, all United States & Coalition forces will suspend offensive combat operations. It is up to Iraq whether this suspension on the part of the Coalition becomes a permanent cease fire. Coalition of political & military terms for a formal cease fire include the following requirements:

"Iraq must release immediately all Coalition prisoners of war, 3rd country nationals & the remains of all who have fallen. Iraq must release all Kuwaiti detainees. Iraq also must inform Kuwaiti authorities of the location & nature of all land & sea mines.Iraq must comply fully with all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. This includes a rescinding of Iraq's August 2cnd decision to annex Kuwait & acceptance in principle of Iraq's responsibility to pay compensation for the loss, damage & injury its aggression has caused. The Coalition calls upon the Iraqi government to designate military commanders to meet within 48 hours with their Coalition counterparts at a place in the theater of operations to be specified to arrange for military aspects of the cease fire. Further I have asked Secretary of State Baker to request that the United Nations Security Council meet to formulate the necessary arrangements for this war to be ended. This suspension of offensive combat operations is contingent upon Iraq's not firing upon any Coalition forces & not launching Scud missiles against any other country. If Iraq violates these terms Coalition forces

will be free to resume military operations.

"At every opportunity I have said to the people of Iraq that our quarrel was not with them but instead with their leadership & above all with Saddam Hussein. This remains the case. You the people of Iraq are not our enemy. We do not seek your destruction. We have treated your POWs with kindness. Coalition forces fought this war only as a last resort & look forward to the day when Iraq is led by people prepared to live in peace with their neighbors. We must now begin to look beyond victory & war. We must meet the challenge of securing the peace. In the future, as before, we will consult with our coalition partners. We've already done a good deal of thinking & planning for the postwar period & Secretary Baker has already begun to consult with our Coalition partners on the regions challenges. There can be & will be no solely American answer to all these challenges. But we can assist & support the countries of the region & be a catalyst for peace. In this spirit, Secretary Baker will go to the region next week to begin a new round of consultations. This war is now behind us. Ahead of us is the difficult task of securing a potentially historic peace. Tonight, though, let us be proud of what we have accomplished. Let us give thanks to those who've risked their lives. Let us never forget those who gave their lives. May God bless our valiant military forces & their families & let us all remember them in our prayers. Good night & may God bless the United States of America."

2/27/91 #1 Day Forty-Two Ends

It's over?

It's over!
Over.

Well -it occurs to
me the Dictator hasn't
agreed to the terms.
Bush has learned to
think like an Arab.
Announcing peace
before his opponent
acknowledges defeat.
Turning the tables,
doing what Saddam
has been trying to
do for the last week.
Call the shots.

The U.N. meets soon
& Aziz is due to attend
& to announce Iraq's
agreement to all terms.

The Iraqi army is
utterly crushed,
their equipment
mostly destroyed.

But you can bet
the Dictator has
at least one more
trick to play.
Should he have none,
that, in itself,
will be a surprise.

later:
"The government of Iraq
agrees to fully comply
with U.N. Resolution 660
&to all the other Security

Council's resolutions."
- Tariq Aziz

The surprise is no
reference to POWs
& detainees in the
acceptance message.

The U.N. said "we're
not rug merchants.
We're not going to
haggle over the terms."

2/27/91 #2 Stormin' Norman Tells All

(Slightly abridged transcript with explanatory notes)

General Schwarzkopf takes the podium
looking sternly pleased & twice as big
as life, which is large indeed, for him,
both physically & in the moment. Trick
of lowering his head quickly with eyes
remaining fixed on his subject & slightly
cocking his left eyebrow which presents
a convincing morphology of fierce canny.

The General has a commander's pace &
flow & speaks in broad rhythms, rarely
saying very when very, very will do.
This is a man who does not mind the
presence of floride in his water. He is
conflicted in his victory by expressed
reluctance to the notion Iraq should
be destroyed as the preferable way to
handle the invasion of Kuwait. But if
it were done t'were better done quickly.
He is here to tell everybody what it was.

The transcript:

(items in parenthesis are my comments describing the visual elements of the presentation)

I promised some of you all a few days ago that as soon as the opportunity presented itself I would give you a complete rundown on what we were doing & more importantly, why we were doing it. The strategy behind what we were doing. We're going to go through a complete briefing of the operation.

The first chart goes back to 7 August to 17 January. Basically what we started out against was a couple hundred thousand Iraqis that were in the Kuwat Theater of Operation. (he waves the pointer from S.E. edge of Iraq, over Kuwait & down 25 miles into Saudi Arabia) We brought over, initially, defensive forces in the form of the 101st, the 82cnd, the 24th Mechanized Infantry Division, the 3rd Armored Cavalry & in essence we had them arrayed (directly S. of the right hand edge of the Kuwait border, around & below Kafji) behind the Saudi task force. Also there were Arab forces arrayed in defensive positions (spread about 30 miles S. of Kuwait's S.W. border section contiguous with the U.S. Forces covering the E.)
And that, in essence, is how we started.

By mid November huge numbers of Iraqi forces had flowed into the area (of S.E. Iraq & Kuwait) therefore we increased our forces & built more forces. At this time we made a very deliberate decision to align all those forces within the (Saudi) boundary looking north towards Kuwait so it looked very much like they were all aligned on the Iraqi positions.

We also at that time had a very active naval

presence out on the gulf & we made sure that everybody understood about that naval presence. It became very apparent to us early on that the Iraqis were quite concerned about an amphibious operation across the shores to liberate Kuwait. They put a very, very heavy barrier of infantry along (the length of the Kuwait coast) & they proceeded to build an extensive barrier that went all the way across the (Kuwait/Saudi) border down & around & up the (coast) side of Kuwait.

Basically, the problem we were faced with was this: when you look at the troop numbers, they really out-numbered us about 3 to 2. And when you consider the number of combat service support people we have, logisticians & that sort of thing, as far as fighting troops we were really out-numbered 2 to 1. In addition to that they had about 4,700 tanks vs. our 3,500 when the buildup was complete & they had a great deal more artillery than we do. I think any student of military strategy would tell you that, in order to attack a position, you should have a ratio of approximately 3 to 1 in favor of the attacker. And in order to attack a position that is heavily dug in & barricaded, such as the one we had here, you should have a ratio of 5 to 1 in the way of troops, in favor of the attacker. So you can see, basically, what our problem was at that time. We had to come up with some way to make the difference. Next chart, please.

What you see here is a color coding where green is a go sign, yellow a caution sign, red a stop sign.

Green represents units that have
been attrited below %50 strength.

(9 green symbols are arranged
along the S. Kuwait/Saudi border,
contiguous with 3 more along
the S. Iraq/Saudi border & 2 more
5 & 10 mi. into Iraq respectively.
Kuwait, North to South, is between
50 & 100 mi. wide, W. side & E. coast
respectively. It is about 60 miles wide
from the gulf mouth to the W. border
& not more than 80 mi. at its widest.)

The yellow are units that are between
50 & 75% strength. (2 in the S.E. corner
of Kuwait about 5 mi. apart; 1 about 10
mi. inland, halfway between the border
& Kuwait City; 2 about 8 miles apart
roughly in Central Kuwait; 1 on the
Kuwait side of the N.W. Kuwait/Iraq
border contiguous with 4 along the
Iraq S.E. border & one back about
100 mi. into Iraq.) And of course the
red are units that are over 75% strength.

(16 yellow symbols on the chart: 5 along
the Euphrates River, extending as far as
75 miles into Iraq; 2 in or around Kuwait
City; 3 a few miles S. of them & 3 more N.
of them 10 to 20 mi. One unit at N. center
of the border, 1 N.E. of them in Iraq &
the last upon the N.W. Kuwait border)

What we did, of course, was start an
extensive air campaign & I briefed
you in quite some detail on that in
the past. One of it's purposes was to
isolate the Kuwait Theater of Operations
(KTO) by taking out all the bridges &

supply lines that ran between the N.
& the S. part of Iraq. (waves pointer
familiarly along the Euphrates)

That was to prevent re-enforcement
& supply coming into the S. part of
Iraq & the KTO. We also conducted
a very heavy bombing campaign &
many people questioned "why?"
It was necessary to reduce them to
a strength that made them weaker,
particularly along the front line
barrier (green) we had to go through.

We continued our heavy operations
out in the sea because we wanted
the Iraqis to continue to believe
that we were going to conduct a
massive amphibious operation in
this area, & I think many of you
recall the number of amphibious
rehearsals we had(note: Neal
always mentioned them in the
closing format section of his
briefings where they seemed
like mere nods of politic
inter-force courtesy but were,
rather, gems of disinformation)
to include Imminent Thunder. That
was written about quite extensively -
for many reasons (his glinting
side glance draws appreciative
laughter from the audience)
but we continued to have those
operations because we wanted
him to concentrate his forces -
which he did. I think this is
one of the most important
parts of the 'retirement
briefing' I could talk about.

As you know, very early on we took out the Iraqi Air Force. We knew that he had very, very limited reconaissance means & therefore, when we took out his Air Force, for all intents & purposes we took out his ability to see what we were doing down here in Saudi Arabia.

Once we had taken out his eyes, we did what could best be described as the "Hail Mary Play" in football. I think you recall when the quarterback is desperate for a touchdown at the very end, what he does is he steps up behind the center & all of a sudden every one of his receivers goes out to one flank, or they all run down the field as fast as they possibly can & into the end zone & he lobs the ball.

In essence that's what we did. When we knew that he couldn't see us anymore, we did a massive movement of troops all the way out to the west, to the extreme west, (points to the area 100 mi. W. of Kuwait near a lone yellow symbol) because at that time we knew that he was still fixed in this area with the vast majority of his forces & once the air campaign started he would be incapable of moving out

to counter this move,
even if he knew we made it.

There were some additional troops
out in this area (near S.W. corner
of Kuwait, Saudi / Iraq border
green markers) but they did not
have the capability nor the time
to put in the barrier that had been
described by Saddam Hussein as
"an absolutely impenetrable tank
barrier that no one would ever get
through." I believe those were his
words. (laughter) So this was
absolutely an extraordinary move,
I must tell you. I can't recall any
time in the annals of military
history when this number of
forces have moved over this
distance to put themselves in
a position to be able to attack.

But what's more important, &
I think it's very, very important
that I make this point, & that's
these logistics bases: (points to
area above King Khalid Military
City & Hafat al Batin Air Base,
30 mi. S. of Iraq's southernmost
border & on up to the border itself).
Not only did we move the troops
out there but we literally moved
thousands & thousands of tons of
fuel, of ammunition, of spare parts,
of water & of food out here into
this area because we wanted to have
enough supplies on hand so that
if we launched this, if we got into
a slug-fest battle, which we very
easily could have gotten into, we'd

have enough supplies to last 60 days.

It was an absolutely gigantic
accomplishment & I can't
give credit enough to the
logisticians & transporters
who were able to pull this off;
to the superb support we had
from the Saudi government;
the literally thousands
& thousands of drivers of
really every national origin
who helped us in this move
out here & of course great
credit goes to the commanders
of these units, who were also
able to maneuver their forces out
here & put them in this position.

But as a result, by the 23rd
of Feb. what you found was
this situation: the front lines
had been attrited down to a
point where all of these units
(green) were at %50 or below.

The 2cnd level we had to face
& these were the real tough
fighters we were worried
about right here (the yellows
in central Kuwait & at its
W. border) were attrited to
someplace between 50/75 %
although we still had the
Republican Guard located
here & here (N. & N.W.
Kuwait Border) & part of
the Republican Guard in
this area (yellow marker
between the 2 above) that

were very strong - & part
of the Republican Guard
up in this area (midway
between the Euphrates & N.
Kuwait border) were strong.

We continued to hit the
bridges all across this area
(along Euphrates to the Gulf)
to make absolutely sure
no more re-enforcements
came into the battle. This
was the situation on the
23rd of February. Next please.

Oh, wait -I'm sorry. (calls
back chart) I shouldn't forget
these fellows. SF stands for
Special Forces: (indicates 2
blue triangles in Iraq, each
near a large strength red
marker, one 90 mi. inland
one 35 mi. N.W. of Kuwait,
both 10 mi. S. of Euphrates).

We put Special Forces deep into
enemy territory; they went out
on strategic reconnaisance for us
& they let us know what was
goin' on out there & they were
the eyes that were out there &
it's very important that I not
forget those folks. Next please.

This, then, was the morning
of the 24th. Our plan initially
had been to start over here
in this area (S.E. Kuwait) &
do exactly what the Iraqis
thought we were going to do

& that's to take them head
on into their most heavily
defended area. Also, at the
same time we launched
amphibious banks & naval
gun fire in this area so that
they continued to think that
we were going to be attacking
along this coast & therefore
fix their forces in this position.

Our hope was that by fixing
the forces in this position,
& with this through here
(4 divisions moving across
the lower S. Kuwait border)
we would basically keep
the forces (fixed in Kuwait
w/ attention diverted to
the S. & the E.) & they
wouldn't know what was
going on out in this area:
(Divisions moving across
the Saudi border 100 mi.
& 75mi.to the W. about
50 mi. into Iraq). I believe
we succeeded in that very well.

At 4 o'clock in the morning,
the Marines, 1st & 2cnd
Divisions, launched attacks
through the barrier system.
(the movement up into S.
Kuwait mentioned above)
They were accompanied by
the U.S. Army Tiger Brigade
of the 2cnd Armored Division.

At the same time 2 Saudi
Task Forces also launched

a penetration through this barrier (through S.E. corner of Kuwait border). But while they were doing that, at 4 o'clock in the morning over here: (the far western position at the Iraqi S. border) the 6th French Armored Division, accompanied by a brigade of the 82cnd Airborne also launched an overland attack to their objective up in this area, Al Salaman Airfield, (20 mi. over the Iraq border, 100 mi. E. of Kuwait) & we were held up a little bit by the weather but by 8 o'clock in the morning the 101st Airborne Air Assault launched an air assault deep in the enemy's territory to establish a foreward operating base in this location right here: (75 mi. E. of Kuwait, 50 mi. into Iraq).

Let me talk about each one of those moves. First of all, the Saudis on the E. coast did a terrific job. They went up against a very, very tough barrier system, they breached the barrier very, very effectively; they moved out aggressively & continued their attack up the coast.

I can't say enough about the 2 Marine Divisions (also on the E. coast). If I use words like brilliant, it would really be an underdiscription of the

absolutely superb job that they did in breaching the so-called inpenetrable barrier. It was a classic, absolutely classic, military breaching of a very, very tough mine field, barbed wire, fire trenches type barrier; they went through the first barrier like it was water; they went across over the 2cnd barrier line even though they were under artillery fire at the time; they continued to open up that breach & then they brought both divisions streaming through that breach. Absolutely superb operation, textbook, & I think it will be studied for many, many years to come as the way to do it.

I would also like to say that the French did an absolutely superb job of moving out rapidly to take their objective (in the far west) & they were very, very successful as was the 101st (25 mi. to right of French, 75 Mi. W. of Kuwait). And, again, we still had the Special Forces located (units 80 & 35 mi. N.W. of Kuwait respectively, both about 10 mi. S. of the Euphrates).

What we found was as soon as we breached these obstacles (area of green markers at S. central & S.E. Kuwait border) & started bringing pressure, we

started getting a lot of surrenders.

The weather, it turned out, was going to get pretty bad the next day & we were worried about launching this air assault (in far west by 101st Airborne, mentioned above) & we also started to have a huge number of atrocities of really the most unspeakable type committed in downtown Kuwait City, to include reports that the desalinization plant had been destroyed & when we heard that we were quite concerned about what might be going on. Based upon that, & the situation that was developing, we made a decision that rather than wait till the following morning to launch the remainder of these forces, we would go ahead & launch those forces that afternoon. Next.

So this is the situation you saw the afternoon of the 24th. The Marines continued to make great progress going through the breach(inside central S. Kuwait border) & were moving rapidly north. The Saudi Task Force on the E.Coast was also moving rapidly to the North & making very, very good progress.

We launched another Egyptian-Arab force in this location (S.W. corner of Kuwait border, heading across a 10 mi. strip of Kuwait into Iraq in the

direction of several yellow
markers) & another Saudi
force in this location (20 mi.
E of the other, headed toward
yellow units in N.W. Kuwait)
again to penetrate the barrier,
but once again to make the
enemy continue to think we
were doing exactly what he
wanted us to do & that's make
a headlong assault into
a very, very tough barrier
system. A very, very tough
mission for these folks here.

But at the same time we
continued to attack with
the French(far west toward
the green markers). We
launched an attack on the
part of the entire 7th Corps;
1st Infantry Division went
through, breached an obstacle
& minefield barrier (in Iraq,
near SW corner of Kuwait,
over about a 10 mi. area),
& established quite a
large breach through
which we passed the 1st
British Armored Division.

At the same time we launched
the 1st Armored Division & the
3rd Armored Division (over a
20 mi. area contiguous with &
W. of the British force). Because
of our deception plan & the way
it worked, we didn't even have
to worry about a barrier, we just
went right around the enemy &

were behind him in no time at all.

The 2cnd Armored Cavalry Division & the 24th Mech Division also launched out here in the far west. And I ought to talk about the 101st because this is an important point. Once the 101st had their operating base established (in the far west) they then went ahead & launched into the Tigris-Euphrates valley.

There are a lot of people still saying that the object of the United States of America was to capture Iraq & cause the downfall of the entire country of Iraq. Ladies & gentlemen, when we were (at the western extreme) we were 150 miles away from Baghdad & there was nobody between us & Baghdad.

If it had been our intention to take Iraq, if it had been our intention to destroy the country, if it had been our intention to over-run the country, we could have done it unopposed, for all intents & purposes, from this position, at that time! But that was not our intention. We had never said it was our intention. Our intention was purely to eject the Iraqis out of Kuwait & destroy the military power that had come in here. So this was the situation at the

end of February 24th in
the afternoon. Next Please.

The next 2 days went exactly
like we thought they would go.
The Saudis continued to make
great progress up on the eastern
flank, keeping the pressure off
the Marines on the (E.) flank.
The Special Forces went out &
started small boat operations
out in (the gulf inlet above
Kuwait City) to help clear
mines but also to threaten
the flanks (from the sea) & to
continue to make them think
that we were in fact going to
conduct amphibious operations.

The Saudi & Arab forces
that came in & took these
2 initial objectives (barriers
& green targets in S.W.
corner of Kuwait) turned
(E.) to come in on the flank
heading towards Kuwait City.

The U.K passed through (S.
Iraq border) & continued to
attack up this flank (to mid-
way up W. Kuwait border)
& the 7th Corps came in
(across S. Iraq border, 50
mi. E. of Kuwait) & attacked
(along the upper half of
the W. Kuwait border).

The 24th Infantry division
made an unbelievable move
(from 65 mi. W of Kuwait

across the border 125 mi.)
all the way across into the
Tigris & Euphrates Valley &
proceeded in blocking this
avenue of egress (across
the Euphrates)which was
the only avenue of egress
left because we continued
to make sure that all of
the bridges stayed down.

So there was no way out
once the 24th was in this
area & the 101st continued
to operate in (the far west)
where the French, having
succeeded in achieving all
of their objectives, set up
a flank guard position to
make sure that no forces
could come in & get us
from the flank. By this
time we had destroyed or
rendered ineffective over
21 Iraqi divisions. Next please.

That then brings us to today,
Feb. 27. We now have a solid
wall across the north, of the
18th Airborne Corps, consisting
of (5 blue marked Allied units
comprising a western flank
extending 35 mi.- from a
point 15 mi. above the S.W.
Kuwait border to a point 10
mi. below it's N.W. border)
attacking straight to the East.

We have a solid wall here
(3 contiguous blue marked

units with a five mile gap,
extending into Iraq as far
as Basra) again of the 7th
Corps also attacking straight
to the east. The forces they
are fighting right now are the
forces of the Republican Guard.
(3 red markers layed out from
near Basra to the mouth of
the Euphrates at the gulf)

Again today we had a
very significant day
when the Arab forces
coming from both the
west & the east closed
in & moved into Kuwait City
where they are in the process
of clearing Kuwait City
entirely & assuring
that it's absolutely secure.

The 1st Marine division
continues to hold Kuwaiti
International Airport.
The 2cnd Marine Division
continues to be at a position
where it blocks any egress
out of the city of Kuwait
so no one can leave.

To date we have destroyed
over 29 -destroyed or rendered
inoperable, I don't like to say
destroyed because that gives
you the visions of absolutely
killing everyone & that's not
what we're doing -but we
have rendered completely
ineffective over 29 Iraqi

divisions & the gates are
closed, there is no way out
of here (W. Flank) & there
is no way out of here (S.E.
tip of Iraq) & the enemy is
fighting us in this location:
(N. of central Kuwait border).

We continue of course to have
overwhelming air power. The
Air has done a terrific job from
start to finish in supporting the
ground forces & we have also
had great support from the Navy
both in the form of Naval gunfire
& in the support of carrier air.

That's the situation at the
present time. Next please.

U.S. Casualty Count chart.
Air War: 17 Jan–23 Feb.
23 KIA, 34 WIA, 39 MIA
Scud Attack: KIA 28, WIA 90
Ground War: 24 Feb-27 Feb
28 KIA, 89 WIA, 5 MIA
Total Casualties:
79 KIA, 213 WIA, 44 MIA

Peace is not without a cost.
These have been the U.S.
casualties to date. As you
can see, these were the
casualties we had in the
air war. Then of course we
had the terrible misfortune
of the Scud attack the other
night which again, because
the weapon malfunctioned,
it caused death, unfortunately,

rather than a proper function.

And then of course these are
the casualties in the ground war,
the death, the casualties being
as shown here. Next. (protest
from audience: would you hold
on for one second?) Hold on for
one second (he instructs his aide)
One second is up. Next please.

KTO GROUND ORDER OF BATTLE
Original Destroyed or
Strength Captured
TANKS 4230 3008
ARMORED 2370 1856
ARTILLERY 3110 2140

We'll have all these charts
available to you afterwards.
Now I would just like to
comment briefly about that
casualty chart. The loss of
one human life is intolerable
to any of us who are in the
military. But I would tell you
that casualties of that order
of magnitude considering the
job that's been done & the
number of forces that are
involved is almost miraculous
as far as the light number of
casualties. It'll never be
miraculous to the families of
those people, but it is miraculous.

Anyhow, this is what's happened
to date with the Iraqis.They started
out with over 4000 tanks; as of
today we have over 3,000 confirmed

destroyed, & I do mean destroyed
or captured. As a matter of fact you
can add 700 to that as a result of the
battle that's going on right now with
the Republican Guard. So that number
is very, very high & we've almost
completely destroyed the offensive
capabilty of the Iraqi forces in the KTO.

The armored vehicle count is also
very, very high & as you can see
we're doing great damage to the
artillery. The battle is still going
on & I expect that the figures will
mount rather considerably. Next.

ENEMY PRISONERS OF WAR

17 Jan - 23 Feb 2,720
24 Feb - 27 Feb 48,000+
TOTAL 50,000+

I wish I could give you a
better number on this, to
be very honest with you.
This is just a wild guess,
an estimate sent to us by
the field today at noontime,
but the prisoners out there
are so heavy & so extensive
& obviously we're not in the
business of going around
counting noses at this time to
determine precisely what the
exact number is. But we're
very, very confident that we
have well over 50,000 prisoners
of war at this time & that number
is mounting on a continuing basis.

I would remind you that
the war is continuing to go on.
Even as we speak right now,
there's fighting going on out
there; even as we speak right
now there's incredible acts of
bravery going on right now:
we had an F16 pilot shot down -
we had contact with him, he
had a broken leg on the ground.
2 helicopters from the 101st,
they didn't have to do it, but
they went in to pull that pilot
out. One of them was shot down
& we're still in the process of
working through that. But that's
the kind of thing that's going on
out on that battlefield right now.

It is not a Nintendo game,
it is a tough battlefield where
people are risking their lives
at all times & they're great
heroes out there & we all ought
to be very, very proud of them.

That's the campaign to date.
That's the strategy to date.

2/27/91 #3 Iraqui Victory!

Radio Baghdad reports the Allies
are retreating with heavy casualties,
totally defeated by Iraq's glorious
army. They say Allies ordered the
ceasefire because of their losses.
A great Iraqi victory! Citizens on the
streets of Iraq appear to believe this.

Will it be in the Dictaro's interests
to let his soldiers come home &
contradict this? Or is he trying
to keep an even keel a couple of
days while he figures out how
to impose martial law effectively
or, failing that, prepares to beat
a personal retreat to Iran as a
quid pro quo for all the airplanes?

Final count on sorties: 110,000.

4200 Iraqi tanks went into war.
200 came out. 4,000 destroyed.
Iraq army reduced to rabble of
no military threat in the region.

42 divisions in,
42 divisions gone.
4 U.S. tanks destroyed.
100,000 Iraqi war dead
& uncounted citizens.
79 Allied dead; most
not by Iraqi agency.

Intellegence reports say
Saddam may have lost his
grip on power in Baghdad.
Stock market dropped 10
points at news of cease fire.

A potpouri of interesting
& colorful information
coming out of the liberated
war zone, much heinous,
but the strong magnetizing
force of War itself is gone
today & own my sense of
involvement seems to drop

away, naturally, like a
handful of iron filings.

2/28/91 The Cheese Stands Alone

The peace drags on.
U.N. just passed
a resolution asking
Iraq for what the U.S.
wants with 11 ayes,
1 nay (Cuba) & 3
abstentions (Yemen,
China & India).

Captured CBS news
crew released after
40 days in Iraqi
captivity, thanks
to a Soviet request.

Reports of anarchy in
Basra where they no
longer like Saddam,
due to being close
enough to the front to
know what happened.
Baghdad still thinks
they won the war.

News of Saddam bid
to flee to Algeria, as
reported by Le Monde,
is supposedly false.

In 3 hours Schwarzkopf
is due to meet with Iraqi
military counterparts in
a tent somewhere in
the desert to stuff the

U.N. proposals down
their throats, at which
point the cease fire
becomes permanent &
troops can start withdrawal.
This station is due
to sign off just as
soon as it's official.

3/2/91 Settlement

It's official.
No more war
here for awhile.

If I were a prisoner
or a prisoner's family;
a soldier or a soldier's
family -I'd hang on
& follow the mop up
but the fact is I'm
just a concerned 3rd
party rapidly losing
motivation to continue
inspecting what is
now the corpse of war.

Yesterday, during a storm,
a racoon died of distemper
on the steps to my writing
shack. I called the Humane
Society & watched her expire
in agony. The difference
between a dying & a dead
thing is immense. It looked
like a big coon while its lungs
struggled for air but the corpse
was a moth eaten diminutive
thing from which something

considerably larger had fled.

I've tried to be fair
& cover the war, rather
than my opinion of it,
but my opinion,
manipulated by
the powers that be,
the sources of my
information & mis-information,
is as much a product
of these grim 6 weeks
as the final body count.

Saddam's secret weapon?
Utter control of Iraq's
radio and television.
He could dare everything,
go into hiding,
come out when it was over
& tell the people he'd won.
He had nothing to lose
but the lives of his soldiers.

Here it is, just as I
saw it on my tube,
not just any war
but the first true
television war,
showing the potential
for minipulation of
mass consciousness
in a way never rivaled.

It will take some time
to regain balance.
A strange music
insinuated itself
deep in my tissue,
a music without melody,

during these days
when I elected to become
a voluntary prisoner
of a war fought on
a 27 inch battlefield.

3/3/91

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